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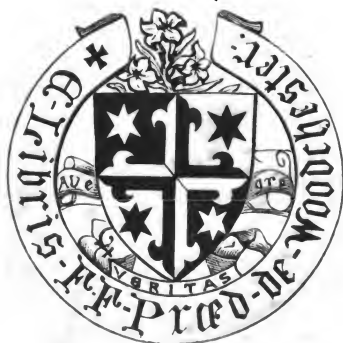
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**S. AELRED**



LIVES  
OF  
THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

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**St. Aelred,**  
ABBOT OF RIEVAUX.

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MANSUETI HEREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

LONDON :  
JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

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1845.

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LIFE OF  
**St. Aelred.**

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CHAPTER I.

*Introduction.*

IT is often said that things look on paper or on canvass very different from what they are in reality ; how often is the traveller disappointed, on arriving at a spot of which he had read in poetry, or seen portrayed by a painter. We repeat over and over again to ourselves that it is beautiful, as if to persuade ourselves of it, and yet there is something wanting ; after all, we have seen woods as green, and streams as clear, and rocks as wild, and the ruined tower that looks over the stream is but a very poor ruin, as the baron who lived there was probably a very indifferent character. And yet were the poet or the painter so unfaithful as we suppose ? They saw it under some particular aspect, when the sun was upon it, or when the woods were coloured by autumn, and they caught it at some moment when one of Nature's endless combinations had made it look more than usually lovely. No two persons see the same scene under the same aspect ; it will not look to-morrow as it does now, and yet it is the same sun, and

the same trees, and the same river. And so it is with history ; the historian must colour his work with his own mind ; it is his view of facts, and yet it may nevertheless be true. Nay, in some respects it is more true than the view which a contemporary might take of them. Kings and queens are doubtless very different from the ermine-covered things which we think them to be, and we must make them objects of the intellect before we can judge of them ; just as a surgeon must in a manner forget that he is operating on flesh and blood, before he can do his duty. Besides which the ideas that contemporaries have of the men of their day, are after all only theories ; they are but approximations to the truth ; events and actions are but exponents of the inward life of men and nations, and none on earth can judge them precisely as they are. We have in this sense only a *view* of our dearest friends, and yet it does not follow that we love an abstraction or an idea. And so it by no means follows that history is untrue because it is the view of the historian ; it is coloured of course by his character and his opinions. The facts of history want an interpretation and are utterly meaningless, like an unknown language, until they are viewed in relation to each other and with the whole period to which they belong. This is what the historian supplies ; his view may be true or false, but all views are not false, because they are partly subjective. All views are not true, for that would in fact be saying that all are false, but some are right and others are wrong, and that, though the facts related are given with equal honesty ; just as in physical science experiments are the same, but the true explanation of them is the simplest formula which will take in all their results.

All this eminently applies to the lives of the blessed

Saints, because the view which we have of them is in all cases coloured by the reverence of the Christian world, and yet it is by no means falsified. It is history with the perpetual interpretation of Christendom ; the mind of the Church acting upon facts in the life of one of her children. It may be quite true that in many instances false miracles or actions which may be proved never to have taken place, may have been ascribed to them. An unknown monk in some obscure monastery may have written a life of a Saint, merely putting together all the traditions which remained of him, without caring to separate the true from the false ; but still the result of the whole may be true ; and the general aspect in which Christendom views the Saint may be the right one, though some particular stories may be false. How few in many instances are the facts known about some of the Saints in the middle ages. Their parentage is often forgotten, and the history of their early years unknown ; or perhaps the names of their parents are preserved with the vague and suspicious addition that they were of very noble birth. Some few great deeds are on record, but the internal struggles which led to them are all forgotten ; all at once they appear before us as perfect Saints, as if no discipline had been required to form them. We are left to eke out the scanty materials of their lives with what we know must have happened, from the character of the times and from the manners of the age. And yet perhaps we should hardly regret this ; the picture of a Saint with the aureole round his head and the meek expression of joy on his features, may be unlike what he was in his lifetime, and yet it may be the more like what he is in heaven now. And after all, if we had come close to him, a real living Saint, should we have

understood him ? If we had lived with St. Basil, might we not have been tempted to look upon him as a peevish invalid, to think him an austere man, or oversensitive, or too methodical, and apt to care about trifles ? Many a holy Abbot must have appeared cross to a lazy monk. We cannot enter into God's Saints upon earth ; even if we stand by their side, we could only make an approximation to the truth, as we do now. This is the case with Saints in scripture. How little has it pleased the Holy Spirit to disclose of their hidden life, just as much of course as we can bear, and as was needful for His Church, and yet how little ! Which of the Saints is there that we can picture vividly to ourselves ? In the case of the blessed Virgin indeed, the Church has marvellously filled up the outline of Scripture ; of her we know one fact, that she was the Mother of God, and the delicate sense, so to speak, of the Christian mind, has found out that this must necessarily involve much more than appears on the surface of Scripture. The Church has so long dwelt in love on our ever-blessed Lord in His infancy, that we almost fancy that we can "come into the house and see the young child with Mary His mother." This may also be the case with St. Paul, who has left so completely the impress of his mind, on his writings, but it is hardly so with any other Saint. St. Mary may be said to live in Christian doctrine ; St. Paul in the Holy Scriptures ; but the other great Saints connected with our Lord have their life in Christian tradition. Even St. John we think of, not as the old man with the golden mitre, but as ever young and beautiful as we have been used to see him in ecclesiastical pictures and sculptures.

All this may perhaps reconcile us to much that is

disappointing from the paucity of materials in the life of Aelred. And yet his life is such an important one, from his being the Cistercian Saint of England, a sort of English St. Bernard, as he is called by his contemporaries, that he seems to deserve that every effort should be made to put forward the little that is known with due prominence. All that can now be done is to interpret the few facts that remain by making him, what he really was, the representative of the internal system of the Cistercian order in England. Facts taken by themselves prove nothing, and to suppose that any real knowledge of by-gone times can be obtained from the bare enumeration of them, is the same error as it would be to suppose that all our knowledge comes to us from experience. Without the light thrown upon them by the cross, the events of the world are the mere stirrings of the sick and dis-tempered life of humanity ; even the lives of Saints are the mere developments of a highly moral man, as the actions of a hero are the development of a great man. If a Christian theory does not interpret the lives of Saints, a Pantheistic one will come in its stead. So we will attempt to show what Aelred was, by showing in what relation the system of which he was the head stood to the world and to the church of the period. As in the life of St. Stephen the external life of the Cistercians was described, so we will attempt now to show what was their inward life, and to bring it out in contrast, not only with the troubled world around, but with that of the leading ecclesiastics of the time. It will then be seen how the cloister was the remedy provided by God for keeping up the contemplative life amidst the busy and distracting scenes in which ecclesiastics were obliged to take part. It is easy to do this



in the case of Aelred, because we have a most complete insight into his religious character from his writings ; and because as he himself is the historian of much that is related, we are only endeavouring to look upon the troubled scene without the cloister as he did himself. And all this it is hoped may reconcile us to the scantiness of facts about himself, and also to the long digressions which such a plan involves ; for it is impossible to give an idea of the work in which he was engaged without pointing out what were the wants of the Church of the period. Besides which we cannot gain a correct view of the middle ages from the lives of Saints alone. They had their good and bad points, like other ages ; and in order to understand the twelfth century, the world and the cloister must be shown in opposition. Thus, though the cloister of Rievaulx will be the central point of the whole, the reader will not be surprised to find himself sometimes on the banks of the Rhine, or beyond the Alps, or to hear the din of border warfare breaking on the peace of the monastery. Though from the fewness of materials, we only catch glimpses of Aelred at intervals, still we will do our best to draw a truthful picture of him, at once the Saint of England and of Scotland, once well known from the Frith of Forth to the banks of the Tyne and the Tees, the man of peace in the midst of barbarian war.

### *The Old Monastery.*

In the beginning of the reign of Henry I. the ancient monastery of Hexham was in a miserable state. Its three Churches were in ruins, and the vast

monastic buildings were desolate ; for ever since the Danes had sacked and plundered it, there had been no monks to dwell there.<sup>1</sup> One chaplain alone, a married priest, lived there with his family, a careless and indifferent man, with one strong feeling in his soul, and that was a love of the old royal line of England, and a hatred of the Normans. The circumstances which led to his dwelling thus with his children, in the midst of the ruinous Abbey buildings, make up a long tale of mingled good and evil. He was apparently one of a priestly race ; for his grandfather and father were priests before him. His grandfather, Alured, the son of Weston, was a good and a learned man. He used to go about through the North, repairing the ancient places which the devastation caused by the Danes had laid waste. One day, there came to him a man who dwelt at Hexham. He told him that an old man dressed in pontifical garments had appeared to him in a dream, and had bidden him go to Alured, and command him to come to Hexham, and search for the relics of the Saints which were buried there. Alured bethought himself awhile, whether this dream were worth attending to ; but he looked at the man who had brought him the news, and felt that they were true. He was a plain man, one of the inferior nobility of the realm,<sup>2</sup> and one who had had in his

<sup>1</sup> Post desolationem Nordhymbrorum quam, irruentibus in Angliam Danis, miserabiliter incurrit, sicut cætera hujus ecclesiæ, hæc Hagulstadensis, ut verbis propheticiis utar, multo tempore sine sacerdote, sine ephod, sine teraphim gemebunda resedit. Quicquid de lignis fuerat, ignis absumpsit, bibliotheca illa nobilissima quam præsul sanctus condiderat tota deperiit. MS. Bodl.

<sup>2</sup> Vir quidam de minoris ordinis proceribus. Ibid.

rough life far more to do with the lance than with the psalter. He thought, therefore, that he might be trusted, and went with him to Hexham. They travelled through St. Cuthbert's domain, and came to Tynedale, a wasted and depopulated country, and when they came to Hexham, the miserable inhabitants of the place gathered about them, to see what they were doing amongst the ruins. When they heard their errand, the poor people caught their enthusiasm, and brought spades, and set to work to help them. From dawn of day they searched till mid-day came, and they found nothing ; they searched as men look for treasure, for the names of Acca and Eata, the ancient Saints of Hexham, whose bodies they hoped to find, were known as household words in the hut of every peasant of Northumberland. They who have no friends on earth, naturally look about them for friends in heaven, and in the midst of their wasted and depopulated fields, they bethought themselves of those who originally reclaimed the country from heathenism. And now they worked on, for they hoped to see before evening fell, and to touch, their sacred relics ; but the day was far advanced, and they had found nothing, and in their disappointment they began to laugh at Alured, for having come all the way from Durham on a fool's errand. But his enthusiasm did not cool, and he rose up, and taking a mattock, went to the porch of the Church, and struck it deep into the ground, saying that there were the holy Bishops buried. So the people set to work again, and by and bye they came to two stone coffins, and there lay the bodies of the Saints, waiting for a blessed resurrection, clad in their pontifical robes, which time had not impaired. And all that night they watched about

them with chanting and prayer, and the next day they placed them in a shrine on the south side of the Church, near the sacristy. Time went on, and the Conqueror ruled in England, and another storm of war had depopulated Tynedale. Other lords possessed the land, who had never heard of the holy Bishops of Hexham. But cruel as was the rule of the new possessors of the soil, yet they brought reformation with them. The Norman Bishop of Durham, William of St. Carilefe, loved not the lazy canons, who, without submitting to any rule whatever, lived on the broad lands which stretched from the Tine to the Tees. They were but poor representatives of St. Cuthbert, those thriftless canons, and it was well to remove them. They had the option of becoming monks if they pleased, and provision was made for them if they chose still to be secular.<sup>1</sup> One alone, the dean, was persuaded by his son, a monk, to remain and take the vows; the others all remained in the world. There was one among them who disdained to receive any thing at Norman hands, and this was the son of Alured. The royal family of England was in exile; English prelates and abbots were compelled to make room for foreigners; he himself and his brethren were

<sup>1</sup> Successit Walchero Guillelmus habitu monachus, qui clericos ab ecclesia Dunelmensi eliminans monachos subrogavit, et aliis quidem possessiones extra ecclesiam ordinavit, alios id suscipere contemnentes expellere non cunctavit. Intra quos prædicti Aluredi filius qui cæteris præerat, cum nihil ab episcopo suscipere dignaretur, adiit venerabilem archiepiscopum Thomam qui primus Normannorum rexit ecclesiam Eboracensem rogans ut ei Hagulstudensem ecclesiam daret ædificandam.—It does not appear what “qui præerat” means, for the dean became a monk of the new monastery. Simeon Dunelm. b. iv. 3.

turned out of their house at Durham, and he disdained to be a pensioner of the stranger. So he bethought himself of Hexham, the seat of the old Saxon bishops, and went there to hide his head till better times came. And, indeed, there were rumours of war in the North, and the king of Scotland might still make a fight for St. Edward's line, though Edgar the Atheling had submitted to the Conqueror, and was soon to assume the cross under Robert, William's eldest son. So away went Eillan, for such was his name, to Hexham. The Bishop, who seems to have been indulgent to the refractory canons, gave him his sanction, though, indeed, Eillan need have been in no dread of a rival, for his new dwelling was a sad scene of desolation. The country around was still bleeding from the vengeance of the Conqueror and the Scot, and in the midst of the deserted fields arose the ruined Abbey itself.<sup>1</sup> Its Church was half unroofed, and the rain and the snow forced a ready entrance through the gaps in the tiles ; the tessellated pavement was in many places torn up, the windows were dashed in, and the high columns were covered with green moss, and with damp, which was rapidly eating away the frescoes on the walls, and on the arch which divided the nave from the choir.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Veniens ad locum homo invenit omnia desolata, muros ecclesiæ sine tegmine sordere feno, silvis supercrescentibus horrere, litura imbribus et tempestate dejecta, nihil pristini retinuisse decoris. Erat autem talis terræ illius desolatio ut fere biennio ex solo venatu et aucupio se sum, que familiam sustineret. So well was the remembrance of the family kept at Hexham, that there was not long ago, and may be still, a street in Hexham called Eilan's street.*

<sup>2</sup> *Arcum sanctuarii historiis et imaginibus et variis cælaturarum figuris—decoravit. Rich. Hagulst. de statu eccl. c. 3.*

Amidst these ruins lived the family of the Saxon priest ; the Abbey lands were amply sufficient for their maintenance, but there were no corn-fields around, and no vassals to till them ; so they lived on hunting and hawking for two years after their arrival, and in the thick woods around them, many a wild deer was aroused by the horns and the hounds of the Saxons. Not long after they came there, the Abbey lands were given to a Norman, by Gerard, Archbishop of York, and this of course did not make Eillan love the strangers a whit more. He was allowed to continue there as chaplain, and a large part of the proceeds still came to him. After his death, his son, also called Eillan, the priest whom we have seen at Hexham, succeeded his father. He found himself heir to the ruined Abbey, and he inherited too the feelings and prejudices of his family, the love for Hexham and its Saints, and for the old royal line of England, and probably, no great good-will to the Norman rulers, ecclesiastical or civil. But it is said of him that he was "a sinner, and that he lived as he ought not to have done."<sup>1</sup> What this means is not known, but it is probable that he was of the jovial race of hunting priests, who knew more about the winding of horns and the cheering of hounds than about Gregorian chants ; for these unsacerdotal accomplishments were but too common among the Saxon clergy of the time. This was

<sup>1</sup> Qui, licet peccator secus quam oportuit vixerit—ecclesias, tamen Christi renovandas ornandas serviendas devotum se et sollicitum exhibebat.—MS. Bodl. From the same manuscript it appears, in the dedication of his life of St. Bridget, that Lawrence, Abbot of Westminster, knew Eillan, and received from him the original life, which being "semi-barbara," he polished up and made "Latinissima."

not a promising character for the father of a Saint, and yet Eillan had three sons, one of whom was Aelred,<sup>1</sup> and a daughter, who became a holy recluse.

The present is not the first time in the annals of England that her monastic system has been extinct ; at least it was so in the north at the period of which we write ; and in the south the spirit of monks seems to have well-nigh disappeared, though there were still vast Abbeys, flourishing in worldly wealth. But their Abbots were often men frank-hearted and generous, yet with far more of the noble lord about them than of the churchman. A type of them was the high-spirited Abbot of St. Alban's, who disdained to submit to the Conqueror, and left his Abbey for the fastnesses of Ely, where Hereward was still fighting for the old royal line of England. In the North, however, monastic life was fairly extinct, and if by chance a stray monk, in the black Benedictine habit, was seen north of the Humber, men stared at his cowl and shaven crown as they would at the strange dress of a foreigner.<sup>2</sup> Aelred, then, was born amid the very ruins of the ancient monasticism of the North. Instead of the green banks where grew primroses and violets, the first place where his little feet would naturally take him, would be the ruined nave of the old church, with its mysterious side chapels ; and there were beautiful faces of Saints peering out upon him, amidst the damp green moss which

<sup>1</sup> The common date for the birth of St. Aelred is 1109. The evidence of this depends on the date assigned for his death in the life of him, given in the Bollandists, which says that he died in 1166, in his fifty-seventh year.

<sup>2</sup> Simeon Dunelm. in. ann. 1074.

was struggling with the bright colours of the frescoes. And he would first hear of St. Wilfrid, the founder of Hexham, though his relics were far away at Canterbury, for it was he who traced the pictures on the walls, to instruct the barbarous people whom he had to teach.<sup>1</sup> He would hear, too, of Acca, the successor of St. Wilfrid, the friend of Bede, for though his name was almost forgotten in the ecclesiastical calendar, the peasants knew his shrine, and every little child could tell where the relics of the holy Bishop lay.<sup>2</sup> His first play-ground would be the ruined cloisters of the Abbey, where the crosses still marked the graves of the old monks. And the stories which he heard were of the good St. Edward, with tales of King Alfred's wars and of Edmund Ironside.

He was not many years old when a change took place at Hexham, which took away some portion of its desolateness. His father had a brother, a religious and devout man, who was grieved at seeing the possessions of the church thus turned into a family inheritance, and by his persuasion, Eillan was induced to apply to the Archbishop of York for some canons to serve as a germ for the future restoration of the community. Conscious as he was of his own disorderly life, he still loved the Abbey, and had done his best to clear away the rubbish from the Church, and to repair the most

<sup>1</sup> Verum ubi eam beatissimus præsul Wilfridus, adductis secum ex partibus transmarinis artificibus, miro lapideo tabulatu ut in præsentiarum cernitis, renovavit, et ad devotionem rudis adhuc plebis conciliandam picturis et cælaturis multifariam decoravit. MS. Bodl.

<sup>2</sup> Nam ante translationem multis annis cum adhuc puerulus essem Accam, Alchmundum, Fredenbertum, Tilbertum ibi simul requiescere nihil hæsitans populus totus clamabat. Ibid.



ruined portions. It was probably connected in his mind with the old glories of England ; there is a strange connexion between loyalty for an exiled royal family and religion. The devotional feeling is often merely hereditary as well as the loyalty ; yet it is true that the party of a dethroned monarch is generally also that of religion. In this way, probably, did Eillan love Hexham and wish for its restoration ; still his disinterestedness did not carry him so far as to give up one jot of his personal rights over the Abbey lands. So poor were the canons that they often found it very hard to live on the poor remnant of their property ;<sup>1</sup> and yet Eillan showed no inclination whatever to better their condition. However the canons were there, and Aelred could not wander about the old Abbey-buildings without seeing them, and hearing them chant the service. Monks and monkish men are always good friends with children, and doubtless the fair-haired Saxon boy soon made their acquaintance. He was a happy boy, running wherever he pleased about the old Church and Abbey ; and it may have been the remembrance of his curious old home on the banks of the Tine, and of his holy childhood, which made him dwell with peculiar joy on the infancy and childhood of our blessed Lord, in after-times, when, after many a hard struggle, he had gained another home, even more peaceful and secluded. Strange, indeed, it is, when by dint of fighting and hard blows we have been moulded into that character which in substance is to be ours for all eternity, to look back upon the time of our malle-

<sup>1</sup> *Curam parochiæ cum maxima parte beneficiorum—de ipsis canonicis longo tempore tenuit.*—Richard of Hexham, *de stat. eccl. Hag.* 2. 8.

able and plastic childhood. How little often can we remember of it! A mazy dream of sicknesses, and pains all coloured by the scenes in which our lot was cast, the sounding sea or the watery meadows, or the high mountains.

So small a portion of Aelred's life was spent there, that his chroniclers have forgotten it. An obscure charter found in Richard of Hexham incidentally preserves the memory of it. And yet these years of his childhood had much influence on his future life; the chant of the canons remained as an undersong amidst all the festivities and the tournaments of a king's court; for this is the next scene in which we find him.<sup>1</sup> When he quitted his home at Hexham, Aelred became the playmate of a prince's son. David, the brother of Alexander, king of Scotland, and heir apparent to the throne, took him into his family and brought him up with his son Henry. David had left his country in early life, and had preferred the court of his brother-in-law, Henry I. of England, to the chance of succeeding to the turbulent throne of Scotland. He had married the daughter of earl Waltheof, who had fallen a victim to the resentment of the Conqueror, and who was regarded as a martyr of the Saxon cause. His mother was Saint Margaret, the sister of Edgar Atheling. Add to which, besides the two earldoms which he possessed, Huntingdon and Northampton, he had also a claim upon Northumberland<sup>2</sup> in right of his wife, who was

<sup>1</sup> "Ab ipsis incunabulis," says Aelred, "cum Henrico vixi." De gen. Reg. Angl. ap. Twysden, vol. i. 368.

<sup>2</sup> David claimed Northumberland for his son Henry on this ground. Fordun, v. 42.

descended from the old earls of the county. He would thus be naturally brought to Hexham, the spiritual capital of Northumberland ; and its staunch old Saxon priest would be sure to attract the notice of a descendant of Saint Margaret. Another circumstance would draw him towards the little Aelred ; his first child had perished in his infancy by a terrible accident,<sup>1</sup> and Henry, his son, was left without a companion, for David never had any other male children. The beauty of the Saxon boy struck him, and he determined to bring him up with his son, for his daughters, Clarice and Hodierna, could be no mates for the high-spirited boy, who in after life was called Henry the heroic. Henry was a devout and good prince, and even when he grew older and was a soldier in the camp, was said to be like a young monk. But there was another boy of more congenial tastes to Aelred, and that was Waltheof, the son of David's queen by her former husband ; but of him more by and bye.

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### *The Reformation in Scotland.*

#### CHAPTER II.

WHO could have in the whole world better prospects than Aelred ? The courts of England and Scotland were opening upon him ; a rich heiress with a noble fief, or, if he preferred the church, a mitred abbacy would have been reasonable objects of a laudable ambition. But here we must pause and while Aelred is

<sup>1</sup> Orderic Vital. Ecc. Hist. 8. in ann. 1092.

growing up in David's family, take a look at the state of politics in the north. The kingdom of Scotland, I had almost said the church, was in process of formation. It was Aelred's destiny to be thrown among the ruins of a state of things passed away ; by and bye he will assist in the raising up of a new system ; but we must first learn what were the wild and unruly elements among which his lot was cast. Alas ! for Scotland. How was it ever to become like a Christian kingdom ? Its hierarchy was as yet unformed ; it had been cast out of the stream of European civilization, and its communications with the Christian world were but few and far between. The sixth century is a long way off from the twelfth ; and it was in that early time that a voice was heard going through the western isles and the wild coasts of Argyle, proclaiming peace on earth, good-will towards men. The good news spread across to the mainland, from Oban, down by the banks of Loch Awe, even to the wild head-land of Cantyre ; and the savage people were turned to the faith of Christ. It was then that in the north arose Iona, or Icolmkill, Columba's cell, and the kings of Norway, of Scotland, and of the Isles, chose to lie around the shrine of St. Columba, while in the south among the Picts, St. Ninian had founded Whiterne. Still it is quite true that Christianity never seized upon the hearts of the people as it did in the south ; it was a hard task indeed to penetrate through all the wild glens, the winding lakes, and the forests of pine which lie among those savage mountains, but this it did accomplish ; what it did not do was to bend the stubborn heart, the rough and disputatious temper of the men. There was something forbidding in the original Scottish monks : they did not

seize on the hearts of the people. They never succeeded in extinguishing hatred between rival races, and while England was one kingdom at the Norman conquest, Scotland had not even a right to one name ; it was Pictland as well as Scotland, and there was in the north beyond the Grampians, still the Gael, the wild and untamed savage of the north. Scotland was really only Argyleshire and the Isles ; the country beneath, from the two Friths, that is, the Lothians and Strathclyde, belonged to England ; while Galloway, with its savage Picts, was a debateable land, ground down between both. Christianity had not drawn together the hearts of the savage chieftains ; and what was worse, it had not succeeded in purifying their vices ; among no nation, calling itself Christian, was the sanctity of marriage so little respected as among the Picts and Scots.<sup>1</sup>

Alas ! for Scotland. By the time of the Norman Conquest, the work of St. Columba and St. Ninian was undone. Whiterne had no bishop ; he had long ago been driven away in some of the cruel and constant wars which raged in the country. In Scotland, the bishopric of St. Andrew's was still standing. But all was in a miserable state ; there too monasticism had disappeared ; the far-famed Culdees were a set of degenerate priests ; they had given up their original rule, and had wives and children ; and it is said of them that they hardly ever celebrated mass at St. Andrew's altar, except when the king came to see them.<sup>2</sup> In this state of things, it was well for Scotland that, by God's will, its kings became feudal vassals of England. Feudalism, instead of being as has been

<sup>1</sup> See St. Aelred's Life in the Bollandists.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton, Enquiry, Appendix, p. 462.

supposed, the partition of a territory, among many lords, was in reality the binding of a number of disjointed communities into one. The independent patriarchal chieftain who did homage to his conqueror and received back his lands from him, was bound on pain of forfeiting them, to assist his suzerain whenever he required his services ; and the feudal head thus became the centre of a number of before disjointed hordes.<sup>1</sup> But feudalism also contained another principle, and that was, that within his own territory each lord was absolute ; his suzerain could not interfere with his jurisdiction ; infangthief and outfangthief implied a very perfect and intelligible power of hanging and imprisoning as he pleased. This of course varied with the real power of the suzerain : in proportion as he was strong, his vassals were less independent ; thus, for instance, the great vassals of the French king were much more like independent chieftains than an English earl under the Conqueror or Henry II. In the case of Scotland, the king, while he became the vassal of the English crown, strengthened his authority at home. He became himself a feudal superior over his people, instead of a patriarchal chieftain with limited powers. Besides which the English king made him the feudal lord of Cumbria, which included not only the modern shires of Renfrew and Lanark, but “merry Carlisle” also, and the whole of Cumberland, to be held as a fief from himself. And the very dependent relation in which he placed himself was perhaps more useful to himself

<sup>1</sup> Those who know Sir Francis Palgrave’s great work on the Anglo-Saxon Constitution, will see at once how much the author is indebted to him for pointing out the relation which existed between England and Scotland, and throughout this chapter.

and his people in another way. It made him a portion of the great European body, and brought them into contact with the rest of Christendom.

The Norman Conquest indirectly still further improved Scotland. Malcolm Canmore, an intelligent and upright prince, was then on the throne. He had been driven into exile by Macbeth, the murderer of his father, and had lived for fourteen years in king Edward's court; here he had learned a lesson which he did not forget when he returned to his own wild and troubled home in the north. He had learned what was the meaning of a feudal king, not only the leader in war of a savage horde, with whom he was the common proprietor of a certain number of streams and mountains, but the lord of the soil, the dispenser of justice, according to determinate forms. He had had before him also a model of devotion, chastity, and justice in the saintly Edward. He had seen also there Margaret, a Saxon maiden, then a child of ten years old, and the neice of the Confessor, in whose veins flowed the blood of the royal house of England, and the imperial line of Germany;<sup>1</sup> and when he came back to his desolate palace of Dunfermline, surrounded by wars abroad and treachery within, he still thought of the holy family which he had seen in his exile at Westminster. After many years news came to Scot-

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm was fourteen years in Edward's court; he left it at the latter end of the year 1056, the very year in which Margaret came back from Hungary. Comp. Fordun, lib. v. c. 7, 11, 16. Orderic, as Sir F. Palgrave has observed, says that St. Edward betrothed Margaret to Malcolm. This appears inconsistent however with Turgot's narrative, if Fordun gives it rightly; for he seems to imply that Edgar betrothed his sister to Malcolm.

land that St. Edward was dead, and that Harold had seized on the throne ; and next that a great battle had been fought, and that the Normans ruled in England. Malcolm at once armed his powers in favour of Edgar, and of the line of St. Edward ; but the Conqueror was too strong for him, and his country was invaded, and he himself compelled to submit. What in the meanwhile was become of Margaret ? One day, Malcolm was sitting in his palace of Dunfermline ; the wind had been blowing fiercely, and news was brought him that a large ship had been driven by stress of weather into the bay. He sent down to the shore some of his nobles to see where the strange ship had come from ; then they brought him word that they had seen a man of princely bearing disembark with two maidens, one taller than the other, and of surpassing beauty. Malcolm sent for them, and found to his joy that they were the exiled family of England, whom God had thus directed to his land. Poor Margaret ! she had looked with terror at the high mountains and rugged rocks of the land on which they had been cast, and with still more terror at the wild looks of the nobles, who had come to gaze upon them ; but she now thanked God who sent to them a protector who loved the memory of St. Edward. Not long after, Malcolm begged of Edgar to bestow upon him the hand of his sister, and Margaret became queen of Scotland. It was by God's good providence that the line of St. Edward was planted afresh in Scotland ; it was providential too that Margaret was chosen at this special time to be queen of Scotland, for it was a turning-point in the history of the country, and Margaret became its reformer.

What could a poor foreign maiden do on such a



throne ? amidst a court, where the utmost depravity prevailed, and the wild nobles swore unchristian oaths in the presence of their queen. The very loneliness, and the distance from her country, was enough to appal the heart of a maiden ; and the rude rafters and comfortless halls, and the windy passages of an old northern palace, were in themselves sufficient to weigh down with its gloom the heart of a female, brought up in the palace of Westminster. What then could Margaret do ? with what sceptre could she sway her unruly court ? and yet she did reform Scotland, and that too, church and state. And if any one asks how she could do this, I will tell him how another queen did not do it. There once came to Scotland, from a foreign court, a queen, like Margaret, of surpassing beauty, of strong affections, and of a cheerful disposition, loving to make all happy about her. But with all her advantages, Mary did not win the hearts of the people, nor reform the wickedness of her nobles, and her reign ruined all that was left of the Church. It is only when, after long years of penitence, she died on the scaffold, confessing her faith, that we can look with complacency on Mary. But the strength of Margaret lay in her being a saint. It is true she was what is called a clever woman ; she knew Latin, and rejoiced in conversing with the learned men of the realm. But cleverness is not enough to effect a reform in a barbarous nation. She had that indescribable tact by which saints know how to manage those about them, and to do almost unconsciously just what they ought. A cold dignity might have awed, but could not have won over the nobles of her unruly court. But Margaret had a well-spring of quiet happiness in her heart which made her smile on all around her. Her

happy cheerfulness was like the purple light which throws a warm tint on the cold mountain snow. In her saintly uprightness she could afford to be amiable without losing her dignity ; and no one durst venture before her on an evil jest, for she had a strange power in her presence which rendered it impossible. The refractory warriors who frequented her husband's table would not wait till grace was said, and she won them to submission by sending round a cup of choice wine to be given to those who remained, and it was still in after-times called the grace-cup, or St. Margaret's cup. Her character had so endeared her to her husband, that she possessed an unbounded influence over him. His was no weak and easily compliant mind, and yet she converted him to habits of devotion and piety, which were rare indeed among the wild warriors of the twelfth century. He allowed her as much money as she would to distribute among the poor, and with his own royal hands helped her every day to feed the multitudes whom she served within the palace. With her he washed the feet of the poor ; nay, so completely did he allow her to give herself up to the boundless love of Christ's poor ones that continually welled from her heart, that he permitted her to bring impure lepers into their common chamber and kiss their sores. He knew well that it was no weak or fanatical devotion which made her do so, but a love for her Lord, and an intense realization of His oneness with His suffering members. Sometimes she would pretend to steal from the royal treasury what she distributed to the poor, for she knew well that her playful theft pleased her husband ; and Malcolm would take her by the wrist, with her hand thus full of gold, and bring her to her confessor, and ask him if she were

not a little thief caught in the very act, who deserved to be well punished. He would take up the books in which she read, and kiss them in fond devotion ; sometimes he would carry them away, and have them beautifully illuminated with figures of saints and golden letters ; he would cover them with gold and jewels, and bring them back to her with joyful triumph.

Her gentle influence was exerted in improving the taste, and refining the manners of Scottish females ; the most terrible licentiousness reigned in the kingdom, but she was like a light from heaven, a type of all purity to her subjects, and her example purified the land. She had ever about her a number of noble maidens, whom she brought up within the palace, and there wrought rich palls for the altar, and magnificent vestments of all sorts for the service of the Church. To purify and refine their taste, she encouraged merchants to come to the kingdom, and of them she bought the richest wares, gold and silver vases, and jewels of price. Into this her little court where she sat with her maidens at work, she admitted none of the nobles but those of whom she had a good opinion ; and she was herself the life and the centre of the circle.

But one thing Margaret did, which Popes and Councils had found a hard matter, and that was, to bring the Church to a uniformity with the rest of Christendom. Strangely indeed had the old tendencies of the Scotch Church developed. Three centuries had passed since the monks of Iona had submitted to be like the rest of Christendom ; but these had been centuries of weakness and of sleep, and when the voice of St. Gregory VII. called men out of their sleep, each

~~Church had to consider what evils it had to reform.<sup>1</sup> Feudalism had created national Churches and striven to cut off the communication between the parts of Christendom, and this even where it falls short of actual schism is sure to weaken the healthy action of the whole.~~ Scotland had had no feudalism, and therefore it had no prince-bishops, no high baronial abbots, and no simony. But the old sour and sullen spirit had come out, and the developments of the nationality of Scotland were curious. They had given up their old way of keeping Easter, but they had taken up a wrong method of keeping Lent. Instead of beginning on Ash-Wednesday, they put off the fast till the Monday after. Besides which, with a sort of northern Jansenism, they excluded sinners from the Holy Communion on Easter-day, even those whom after confession and penitence, the Church would have received. Lastly, they used in the administration of mass, certain superstitious rites, unknown to the Catholic Church.

It was a strange sight, that assembly in which Margaret, with her husband for an interpreter, argued these points with the Scotch, who certainly have ever shown a singular immobility in religious matters, both of practice and of faith. It was hardly the province of a woman ; it was private judgment, and yet Margaret had that strange way of arriving at conclusions without premises, that unreasoning logic, by which the female mind arrives at what is right by an unconscious process. She

<sup>1</sup> The Scotch appear never to have been treated as schismatics by the Holy See, notwithstanding their different mode of celebrating Easter, which was not that condemned in the Council of Nice. v. Baronius, in ann. 634.

had the Catholic church on her side, and it did not require any deep abstract views to tell her that the Scotch were wrong. The natural rectitude of a Christian heart would tell her, when the Lenten fast came round, that it was an unnatural thing to be keeping carnival when the brethren in other lands were fasting and mourning. Brethren and sisters love to be together at Christmas, and when any member of a family is carried to the grave, terrible as is the grief, all like to share it together, and to accompany the beloved body to the tomb. The Christian world is one family, and when the bells in England rang out an Ash-Wednesday sound, Margaret would not have them rung with a merry chime in Scotland; as well might a sister dance while her brother is in mourning. Thus, the strangely Catholic instinct of the Christian heart would alone guide Margaret, without any profound abstract views of unity and uniformity. Cold and dead does reasoning fall upon the soul, in comparison with this yearning for oneness, of the same nature, as the love of brethren and sisters, though tenfold stronger. In such cases private judgment may be safely left to itself, and becomes infallible; and so Margaret felt that she could not err, though she were teaching the doctors of the church of her nation. And so again with respect to Paschal communion, one who had herself received the Body of her Lord at Easter would feel it strange that any one who was not actually excommunicated should be banished from the altar at that holy time; and when the Clergy urged those fearful words of St. Paul against those who receive unworthily, "All are unworthy in one sense," answered the queen, "but they who for many days before have done penance after confessing their sins on Easter-day, coming to the table of the Lord in the Catho-

lic faith, receive the flesh and blood of the immaculate Lamb, not to judgment, but to the remission of sins." Three things more she obtained from the council, the abolition of superstitious rites at the holy sacrifice of the mass, the observance of the Sunday, which had fallen into disuse in the realm, and certain canons against unlawful marriages. The high spirited Scot, in his enthusiastic love for her goodness, gave up to her gentle persuasion what the authority of their king could not have extorted by force, and what they would never have yielded to the arguments of the Saxon priests.

And now it may well be asked what was the hidden life of Margaret. This cheerful queen, who walked abroad clad in gold and jewels, could hardly have an ascetic air ; and yet beneath her gorgeous robes was a body chastised by perpetual fasts, and knees hardened by long prayers. She kept a fast of forty days before Christmas, in addition to the fast before Lent ; and during those seasons of penitence she rose before midnight, and spent the hours of darkness in singing psalms. A great part of this time she was often alone in prayer in the Church, and when the clerks came in to sing their office, they found her there ready to join them. As the day dawned she lay down again for a very short time to refresh her weary body ; and all this while, during these long and wearing fasts, she was going about doing works of active benevolence. Even before her second brief sleep in the morning, she, with Malcolm's help, had washed the feet of six poor people, and given them alms to relieve their wants. And scarcely had she risen again, when nine orphan infants were brought to her ; she stooped down on her knees to feed them ; and none of the details of sops and of baby linen

were beneath her royal care. During the day three hundred poor were relieved by her own hand, and that of the king. She had another care, of which nothing has yet been said, the care of her children, and how she fulfilled this duty the subsequent history of Scotland bears witness. How well she loved them and her royal husband, her death will tell. Neither her austere life and religious exercises, nor, what was much more likely to do it, her gold and jewels, and queenly apparel, had seared her woman's heart. Her husband and her elder sons were in England engaged in the siege of Alnwick, and she herself had long been ailing, and was now very ill. One day her attendants observed that she was sad, an unusual thing with her ; her heart was thinking on her husband and her sons, who were far away over the border, fighting on English ground, and she said to those about her, " Who knows whether some great evil has not happened to the Scottish realm ?" She got daily worse and worse, and her features had already the paleness of death upon them. She had received the last sacrament, and ordered the Black Cross to be brought to her. It was a piece of the true cross, on which was an ivory figure of the Lord crucified, the whole enclosed in a beautiful reliquary of gold.<sup>1</sup> She had brought it over with her from England, and now she wished to die with it in her hands, and when it was found hard to open the case in which it was contained, she exclaimed, " Ah ! wretched sinner ! I am not then worthy to look upon the Holy Cross ;" and when at length it was brought to her, she kissed it, and wept over it, and glued it to her lips, repeating all the while the fifty-first psalm. At this moment her son Alexander entered the

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred, de Genealog. Twysden i. 349.

room ; she revived on seeing him, and asked him for news about his father and brother. He answered that they were well ; the dying queen, however, guessed the truth by his mournful countenance, and conjured him by the Holy Cross, which she held in her hands, to tell her. He then told her the truth ; his father and his brother had both been killed. Margaret raised her hands to heaven, and said, " All praise be to Thee, everlasting God, who hast made me suffer such agony in my death, as I hope, to the cleansing of some of the stains of my sins." And soon after this her poor broken heart ceased to beat.

She went to where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest ; and she left behind her war and desolation in Scotland. Scarcely had the breath passed from her body when it was remarked that a sweet bloom had come over the death-like paleness of her face, and her features assumed a beautiful expression of peace. It contrasted strangely with the wild storm which raged around her sacred relics. A party among the Scots hated the rule of Malcolm, as being a favourer of Sassenaghs and foreigners ;<sup>1</sup> the wild Gael loved not the approach of civilization, and a party was already in arms prepared to besiege the castle of Edinburgh, where lay her body. Hurriedly by a postern door her sacred remains were conveyed away, and buried in the Abbey of Dunfermline. The rebels succeeded for a time in expelling her son from the throne. For five years war and rapine ravaged Scotland, and usurpers wore its crown,

<sup>1</sup> Omnes Anglos qui de curia regis extiterunt de Scotia expulerunt—Post hac eum regnare permiserunt ea ratione ut amplius in Scotia nec Anglos, nec Normannos introduceret. Sim-eon Dunelm, in ann. 1093.



but at length it pleased God to restore Edgar, the eldest surviving son of Margaret, to the throne. He was like his great uncle, St. Edward, a mild and amiable prince, and the weary land had peace in his days. After him came a remarkable prince, Alexander, surnamed the Fierce ; and need he had of fierceness, for he had to rule an unruly kingdom, and by main force to keep in awe his rebellious nobles. But fierce as he was to them, he was mild and beneficent to the Clergy, whom he loved for his sainted mother's sake. They were men of enlightened policy, these kings of Scotland ; they cherished all the learning and goodness which the Norman invasion had drifted from the south. This, however, might have been, merely the effect of circumstances ; the Saxon kingdom had stretched to the north as far as the castle of the Maidens, the modern name of which, Edwin's burgh, even now bears witness to the Saxon rule. The policy of the Saxon kings by giving it to be ruled as a fief by the Scottish king had converted a dangerous enemy into a friend, and when the Norman conquest came sweeping before it all that was English, it was natural that the Saxons should retire towards the north, and Sassenagh, the name so long applied to the Lowlander by the Gael, bears witness to the extent of the southern importation. It shows also their contempt for their native kings who had adopted the manners and civilization of the Southron ; and this feeling created the party among the native Scottish nobles, which cost so much trouble to Alexander and his brothers. This would naturally incline the king to those of Saxon blood. But it could be nothing but a sound and Christian policy which prompted them to amalgamate their discordant races by the erection of

new bishoprics.<sup>1</sup> St. Andrew's, for a long time, was the only fixed Scottish See, and its Bishop was called the

<sup>1</sup> Amidst the great confusion attending the ecclesiastical History of Scotland, it is difficult to fix the time of the creation or revival of the sees. The common account given in Buchanan cannot be trusted, for St. Aelred, (*de Genealog. Twysden*, p. 348.) expressly says that David found only three or four sees when he came to the throne. The truth probably is that there were great irregularities, (as appears from the 43rd canon of the second Council of Chalons) and that the sees were for a long time unfixed. It appears that by an unusual regulation, the Abbot and monks of Iona had, not of course the consecration, as has been supposed, of Bishops, but their appointment and mission, v. Thomassin, 1, 3, 14, 12. The Bishops thus continued to be like Bishops in partibus without fixed sees. It is difficult to fix the precise time when this state of things ceased. It probably did not cease at once, for in David's time there was an irregular election of a Bishop, which looks like a part of the old system, v. William of Newbridge, i. 23; and as late as 1297, the Culdees made an effort to regain the right of election. It seems, however, likely that Alexander effected the real change by taking the jurisdiction out of the hands of the Culdees, and thus fixing the sees. First, the expulsion of the Culdees from St. Andrew's, and the revival of Glasgow was in his time. The latter event indeed was executed by David, as appears from the inquisition taken by him in Pinkerton; but it was done before he came to the throne, and while he was ruler of Cumbria under his brother, as was usual with the heir apparent to the throne, v. Palgrave, p. 441. Secondly, a passage is quoted in the preface to Twysden, from a manuscript in the Cotton library, which, though it contains mistakes, is too remarkable to have been written without authority. Anno. ab Inc. Domini 1108, ac tempore Regis Malcolmi et S. Margaritæ electus fuit Turgotus, Prior Dunelmensis in Episcopatum St. Andreae et in diebus illis totum jus Keledeorum per totum regnum Scotiæ transivit in Episcopatum S. Andreae. Turgot was not made Bishop by Malcolm, but by Alexander; and so it appears that in Alexander's days the jurisdiction over Scotland was taken away from

Bishop of the Scots,<sup>1</sup> as the prelate of Whiterne, as successor of St. Ninian, was the Bishop of the Picts. To this see king Alexander added Glasgow and perhaps also Elgin, or at least he revived them; and took care to appoint to these sees men of learning and piety. But the throne of a Scottish diocese was by no means an easy seat. Turgot, whom Alexander early in his reign appointed to the see of St. Andrew's, went back to his cloister of Durham, for his heart sunk within him at the difficulties which surrounded him. Eadmer, too, the companion of St. Anselm, was elected to the same see, but the very next year he came back to Canterbury, for it was better to be a simple monk of St. Benedict than to bear the weary crosier of St. Andrew's. Again, John, the new Bishop of Glasgow, fairly ran away to Rome, and from thence to the Holy Land, and could only be brought back but by an express command of the Holy See. One part of their difficulty was doubtless

the Culdees, and<sup>2</sup> transferred to the Bishop of St. Andrew's. The actual erection of St. Andrew's into a metropolitan see was not effected till long afterwards, owing to the opposition of the Archbishop of York; but the breaking of the power of the Culdees, is in this passage clearly expressed. It is therefore most likely on the whole that the great change is to be referred to him, and not to Malcolm. Caithness and Elgin may have been revived by Malcolm; yet it is remarkable that the revolt in consequence of which they are said to have been erected, is probably that said by Fordun to have occurred in Alexander's time. The creation of the greater number of the Scottish Sees is owing to David, as St. Aelred says that on his accession to the throne he found three or four sees, but at his death left nine. Two out of these four are known to have been St. Andrew's and Glasgow, the other two were probably Elgin and Caithness.

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, Enquiry, Appendix, p. 464.

their difference with the Archbishop of York, who claimed canonical jurisdiction over them, but the chief obstacles lay in their unruly Clergy, the degenerate Culdees. Alexander, however, determined to remedy this evil ; monasticism was reviving in the north of England, and wherever a new monastery was established, or an old one revived, there were the headquarters of religion, and the monks became the instructors of a people, whom the mere pressure of desolation had stupified and brutalized. The example of Durham had given him a precedent for the expulsion of the secularized Culdees, and he substituted regular canons for them at St. Andrew's. He restored to the prior and canons of St. Andrew's the lands which had been taken away from the Church, and the quaint style in which the act of restoration was effected is a specimen of the state of things in Scotland. In the cathedral of St. Andrew's all the nobles of the realm were assembled ; and with them Robert, the newly-elected Bishop, formerly prior of Scone, and the new canons of the convent, their shaven crowns and ecclesiastical habit mingling strangely with the bright armour of the Lowland nobles, and the waving plaid of the chieftains of the Gael. In the midst of this assembly there was led up to the high altar Alexander's Arabian war horse, saddled and bridled, and splendidly caparisoned, with the king's shield fastened to his back, and a silver lance, which afterwards became the shaft of the crucifix of the Church. By this strange charter the lands were delivered to the monks, and the transaction was duly impressed upon the witnesses. Besides which he built the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Scone, the ancient seat of Scottish royalty, and the monastery of St. Columba, in the little island of Inchcolm, in the Frith of Forth ; and any one

who has been on Loch Tay, will remember the green islet where a monastery was erected over the grave of his wife Sibylla.

It was in the year 1124 that Alexander died, shortly after he had conferred the lands on the Church of St. Andrew's. His brother David thus found himself in possession of an unenviable throne, for Alexander died childless.<sup>1</sup> He endeavoured to avoid the dangerous honour ; and indeed he had few temptations to quit the court of England, where he was honoured as the first of English nobles. Henry had loved him for the cheerful and warm-hearted disposition which he had inherited from his sainted mother. He had been knighted by the king's own hand, and was a general favourite with the whole court. He related to Aelred of himself, in after times, that he used to smile at his sister, the good queen Maud, and at the filthy objects whose wants, in her charity, she would herself relieve. But even in the thoughtlessness of his youth, he was preserved from evil, and was already distinguished by his zeal for the Church in that part of Scotland which, as heir-apparent to the crown, was his appanage. And now he shuddered at the task which was imposed upon him. He yielded, however, to the persuasion of the Bishops, and was crowned. It was of the utmost consequence to Henry, that in the event of a disputed succession, which was likely, Scotland should be in the hands of one bound to the line of St. Edward by so many ties ; and he, too, probably urged David to accept the throne. David did not find his kingdom so hard to rule as he had imagined. What his brother,

Scimus enim regnum non appetivisse sed horruisse, says St. Aelred.

with all his fierceness, could keep, only at the cost of much labour and blood, he ruled in peace by his meekness and charity.<sup>1</sup> He managed to reconcile, at least to keep in order, the two discordant elements of his kingdom, the old patriarchal chieftains of the plaided clans, and the new nobles which were rising up, the earls and barons of the feudal Lowlands. He was the king, in an especial manner, of the Church and of the poor. A novel personage for Scotland, and one which she had not seen for centuries, meets us at the outset of his reign—a legate of the Holy See. He met the King with the Bishops and Clergy at Roxburgh. In the reign of Malcolm, the queen was the leading figure in the council, and though perfectly justified by circumstances, it was not the usual mode of proceeding, as may well be supposed. David's object was to fix the hierarchy, and to erect a native church, instead of depending on English clergy. To effect the first of these purposes, he more than doubled the number of Bishops; and for the latter object, he erected many monasteries of the Cistercian order, and houses of regular canons. How well he succeeded is evident from the fact, that while contemplation was by no means the line of the old Scottish clergy, some of the distinguished members of the mystic school of St. Victor, at Paris, were Scotchmen. He was in some measure a St. Louis in the twelfth century, and the story of his often returning to his palace at the petition of a poor man, when he had already foot in

<sup>1</sup> Regnum quod frater laboriorissime tenuit, mox ille sine contradictione susceptum, quaquaversum inclinum sibi et quietum tenuit.—Sim. Dunelm. in ann. 1124. St. Aelred calls him the author of the Scottish polity.

stirrup, and the merry horn was calling him to the chase, reminds one of the oak of Vincennes, under which the good Louis sat to give judgment to all who came to him. His brother Alexander's appetite probably was not spoiled when, in his royal justice he hanged a felon ; but David was known to weep on ordering an execution. In another respect was David like the sainted king. The good people, in St. Louis's reign, made jingling rhymes about his love for clerks, and one of David's successors called him a "sair Saint for the crown." And yet James might have had no kingdom to govern, if David had not preceded him ; and doubtless the crown was not the worse for the prayers which monks and nuns offered up in the many abbeys founded by David ; nor were the Scotch less religious because he left nine bishoprics where he found but four. If it had not been for the unhappy invasion of England, which will be noticed by and bye, the parallel with St. Louis would have been complete.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *The Struggle.*

WE left Aelred in his boyhood, the playfellow of Henry, the son of David, Earl of Huntingdon, and we must now be content to find him a youth in the palace of David, king of Scotland. Splendid was the prospect which opened upon him. In a new and flourishing kingdom just about to take its place among the nations of Europe, the favourite of its king, he might have become the first of its nobles. Aelred's family

is said to have been noble,<sup>1</sup> though, from the present situation of his father, it must have been decayed ; and even if he had been base-born, the earldoms and fiefs of this period were not so restricted to men of noble blood but that a poor adventurer might hope to obtain them. It is true, that in most cases the feudal lord would be coincident with the patriarchal chief ; but in England, especially, precedents might be found where the poor knight became an earl, rich in broad lands and in vassals.<sup>2</sup> Society was forming itself anew, and a new nobility was arising in England and Scotland ; and if Aelred had had the warlike taste of Henry, his companion, he might have fought his way to be the head of the Scottish chivalry. But his gentle and retiring spirit led him to books and study, and Aelred followed the example of Waltheof, in preferring his books to tilts and tournaments. Here, too, if he had but been ambitious, a fine field lay before him. He was a man of learning rare in those times. In his boyhood, he had read Cicero and Terence,<sup>3</sup> and those authors quoted by chance in his works, are but specimens of his acquirements in classical learning. He knew the Latin Fathers too, and sundry allusions to genus and species show in him the rising schoolman, to whom the mysteries of the trivium and quadrivium were

<sup>1</sup> Joscelyn. Vita St. Waltheni. ap. Bolland. Aug. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of Henry I.'s favourites, the author of *Gesta Stephani* says, *quique regno nobiliores gloriam eorum et pompam, ægre ferebant, utpote qui ex imo creati genere se multo nobiliores et divitiis excederent et dominio superarent.* *Duchesne. Script. Norm.* 932. v. also 966. He also talks of landless nobles, p. 956. As for Scotland, there are said to have been no earls or barons before Malcolm Canmore's time.

<sup>3</sup> *De spirit. am. lib. iii. p. 469, ed. Gibbons.*



familiar.<sup>1</sup> He left school at an early age, but he still continued his studies at court. He might have led, if he had pleased, the march of intellect, as it may be called, in Scotland, and it would have been hard if a mitre and crosier had not fallen to his share.<sup>2</sup> But never was a soul less ambitious than Aelred's. From his boyhood, his sole ambition was concentrated in loving and being loved; his text-book was Cicero on Friendship, which he read with avidity, and endeavoured to carry out in real life.<sup>3</sup> He read romances too, for he knew that story which in after-days he characterized as "a vain tale concerning one Arthur."<sup>4</sup> The friendship however of David and Jonathan in Scripture, affected him more than all the feats of the Round Table, and the love of Queen Guenever to boot. In the legends of Christian Martyrs, he wept with tears of tenderness over the devoted friendship of the Christian soldier who saved the virgin of Antioch out of the place of shame, and afterwards shared her crown of martyrdom.<sup>5</sup> He went about the world seeking for objects on which to expend his affection, and feeling pained if his love met with no return.

<sup>1</sup> Post scholas præponere relictas. Joscel. Sed proprio sudore et ingenii subtilis sibi innati exercitio expolitus supra multos literis sæcularibus imbutos.—Ibid. Laurence, Abbot of Westminster, in the preface to the Life of St. Bridget before quoted, speaks of his cura literarum in curia regis.

<sup>2</sup> Tanto amore a Scotorum Rege complexus est ut ad episcopum eum promovisset nisi ad Cisterciensem ordinem advo-lasset.—Vita St. Aelred. ap. Boll.

<sup>3</sup> Cum adhuc puer essem in scholis tota se mea mens dedit affectui et devovit amori ut mihi nihil dulcius quam amari et amare videretur.—De Spirit. Ami. Prolog.

<sup>4</sup> Spec. Char. 2. 17.

<sup>5</sup> De Spirit. Anni. i. p. 435.

But this was a case which could not often happen ; for he was too amiable not to be loved by all the world. He lived far from his home, and very little is told of his family ; his mother's name is not once mentioned, but this was made up to him by the love of all about him. He was one of those who, by the smiling faces which ever meet them, feel sure that their presence is always welcome.<sup>1</sup> In the banquetting hall, while the merry jest was going round, his quick wit and ready speech made him an acquisition, while from his guileless unaffectedness no one felt his inferiority. Indeed, his guilelessness almost approached to credulity ; and though quick-witted enough to see into the faults of others, yet he seemed to have an universal belief in the goodness of the human heart, which neutralized his cleverness. His high favour raised him enemies ; but even these he won over by his meekness. One of the king's knights, an envious man, hated him for his good fortune, as he deemed it, and one day his hatred broke out, even in the king's presence, and he loaded him with reproachful and insulting words. But Aelred remained unmoved, and said, "Thou art right, sir knight, and hast spoken right well ; what thou sayest is truth, and I see thou art a true friend of mine." The rude soldier immediately begged his pardon, and swore that he would do his best to serve him. "I am glad of thy penitence, said Aelred, and I love thee the more because by thy hatred I have advanced in love to God." This sweet temper could not fail to bring him friends, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Erat vir optime morigeratus, facetus, facundus, socialis et jocundus. Joscelyn. Vid. also his account of himself, Spec. Chari. i. 28, where he seems to point to something of the sort.*

king above all loved him. He used to tell him family stories about the courage of his father, King Malcolm, and the goodness of his sister Matilda, the queen of England.<sup>1</sup> He gave him the stewardship of his household, a high office, which afterwards gave its name to the royal family of England and Scotland, and which, about that time, a clerk, the favourite and minister of King Louis, held in France.<sup>2</sup>

Happy Aelred ! what had he to do but to lead a religious and literary life ; he was known far and wide for his learning, and an abbot of Westminster dedicated to him a work of his, written "in pure Latin," as being one who "in a king's court cultivated letters." It seems that he went out hunting too with the king ;<sup>3</sup> at least he is well acquainted "with the law of hunting, which they call the *tryste* in vulgar tongue," where all the nobles, with their hounds, were posted in different parts of the wood, so as to surround the quarry ; and he knew well the paths and recesses of the forest, for he describes a flowery knoll in the midst of it, where the tired huntsmen lay down to rest after their toils. At this time it is probable that he made those acquisitions of historical lore which afterwards fitted him to become one of the historians of England. He had inherited the hereditary love for the royal line of

<sup>1</sup> De Genealog. ap Twysden.

<sup>2</sup> St. Aelred is called *dapifer regius*. In common cases *dapifer* means simply the Reeve, but in a king's household it is equivalent to *senescallus*. The *dapifer* of King Louis is called *Major domus regiæ*, or *maire du palais*, in the Chronicle of Morigny, v. Benedictine note to St. Bernard, Ep. 78. Laurence addresses St. Aelred as *dispensator regius*, and he himself talks of his having come *de coquinis non de scholis*.

<sup>3</sup> De Genealog. ap. Twysden. p. 367.

Cedric, and delighted in the beautiful tales of Alfred and St. Neot, and the battle of Ashdown. He loved to trace their genealogy, and he looked forward with hope to their restoration. If to be loved and honoured, and to pass a life in congenial studies, with no enemies, free from great sin, be happiness, then was Aelred happy ; and men, as he passed, pointed him out as a man whose lot was to be envied.

And yet the High Steward of Scotland was not happy. It would be easy to give the reason for this phenomenon in a few words. It was the grace of God, urging him to his place in Christ's kingdom ; it was the cross casting its shadow on all earthly joys. This is of course the proper explanation of it ; but it is through our own feelings and tempers that God leads us, and it is the part of history to unfold the human side of events, which appear to us, and are really, as far as we are concerned, various and successive ; while, as the work of God, they are one. What then was the reason of Aelred's unhappiness amidst all the gifts of nature and of grace ? The friends about him called it morbid restlessness, and he tried to believe them and to shake it off ; but it would come back again for all his efforts. Even his books were tasteless : neither Cicero nor Horace could satisfy him, and the purest latinity could not confer happiness ; nay, the philosophy of St. Augustine and St. Anselm was at fault ;<sup>1</sup> and after he had proved to his satisfaction the being of a God, after having confuted Manichees and Nominalists, the same void was in his heart, and he was still restless.

<sup>1</sup> The sixth chapter of the *Spec. Char.*, lib. i., is evidently taken from St. Anselm ; and the influence of St. Augustine de Trinitate is also evident throughout the *Speculum*.

No one could blame his studies ; it was a noble scheme to reform the taste and arouse the understanding of a nation arising from barbarism ; but it is not enough that a work should be blameless, if it be not that which the Lord requires of us. In itself a literary life is of all others the most empty and unsatisfactory. Things that belong exclusively to this sublunary sphere are at least in their place ; they are all of earth, and they gain the things of earth and men enjoy them as they may. But the student aims higher and fails ; after he has thought, and judged, and analyzed, he has not extended one jot the sphere of human knowledge, because it is human after all. The lowest angel knows at a glance by intuition what is to us a laboured fabric of premise and conclusion, and is at best but the shadow of the truth. After all that is often said about the blamelessness of literary pleasures, they do not satiate the hungry soul a whit the more ; chalk and chaff are not food, because they are not poison. So learned Aelred by a bitter experience : but he had still something else to learn, and that was, that the heart as well as the understanding can be filled but by one object alone. It was not wonderful that Aelred found his high notions of friendship sink under him. Was it altogether Christian, this craving for being loved, this insatiable desire of winning human hearts ? It was not admiration or honour that he sought—it was love ; and is this not only a more subtle form of inordinate affection ? There was once an Archbishop whom any one who knows the works of both, would at once compare with Aelred, like him in his generous devotedness, and his warm affections, the favourite of a king's court, the honoured friend of a king's son. Like Aelred he was of classical taste, consulted by wits and learned

men, a lover of St. Augustine, a Christian philosopher. Yet all were nothing to him, rank, and honour, and wealth ; they slid away from his mind as from a polished surface, and had no hold upon it ; but there was one thing which he wished and obtained, the affection of those about him. High as was his rank, yet the lowest did not shrink before the stately figure of the Archbishop of Cambray and the Peer of France. He was dead to all things but one, and that was human affection. God in his mercy separated him from the being whom he loved most on earth, the king's son, who was his friend and his pupil, and thus was his whole man crucified. How very much of this resembles Aelred's case, we shall soon see ; but meanwhile we will quote the words of this saintly prelate, about this same desire of loving and being loved, which he himself knew so well.<sup>1</sup>

“ After having renounced all that is around us, and which is not self, we must come to the last sacrifice, which is that of all which is in us, and is self. If a man's temper is full of frankness and disinterestedness, if his disposition leads him to take pleasure in doing good, and if he has keen delicacy of feeling, and a taste for fair-dealing and for disinterested friendship, then let him beware lest he fall in love with himself ; let him guard against a feeling of complacency in these natural gifts. Every one must at some time or other have come across some man apparently all for other people, nothing for himself, caressed by all the good, one who gives up his own wishes and is forgetful of self. This same forgetfulness is so great a virtue that even self-love would fain imitate it, and puts

<sup>1</sup> Fenelon, *Nécessité du renoncement*.

its greatest glory in appearing to seek for none. This self-command and renunciation, which would be the crucifixion of nature if it were real and effectual, becomes, on the contrary, the very subtle and viewless instrument of a pride, which disdains all the ordinary methods of rising, and would trample under foot all the gross subjects of vanity, which puff up other men. Still it is easy to pull the mask from this pride, with all its modesty, though it in no way peeps out as pride, so completely does it seem to have renounced all that allures others. If those whom such a man loves, and assists, do not pay him back with their friendship, esteem and confidence, he is touched to the quick. Look at him ; he is not disinterested, however he strive to appear so. The truth is, he pays himself not with the base coin that others seek ; he wants not mawkish praises nor money, nor the proceeds of place and external dignity. Still he has his price too ; he thirsts after the esteem of the good ; he loves that he may be loved, and that hearts may be touched by his devotedness ; he only appears to be forgetful of self, that he may be in the thoughts of all."

Such, or something like this, were the thoughts of Aelred. He saw that his soul was in danger, and that he must fly. He bethought himself of such words as these, "If thy foot offend thee, cut it off ; if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out." And before these solemn words, his glowing thoughts of friendship looked like a dream of romance. He saw that friendship was a negative thing, it might be a virtue, or it might be a vice ; in itself it was neither. It is one of those natural feelings, which with the whole of man's moral nature is taken for granted in the Gospel. True it is that our blessed Lord has ennobled it by His

wonderful condescension in loving St. John, but in ennobling it, He has declared that it must be sacrificed, if need be, to God's will. This was the lesson which Aelred learned ; he recognized that he had made human affection paramount even to the love of God, and the thought struck him at once that he must fly. He turned pale and trembled at it. Oh ! how comes it that it is always the most loving who are called upon to sacrifice their love ? why are the tenderest hearts chosen to be torn ? why are they who love father and mother, and brethren and sisters, and friends, more intensely than others, ever singled out to stand forth and give them up ? It is one of the miracles of God's grace, bringing strength out of weakness. But it is never accomplished without rending of the heart and agony, which makes it a spiritual martyrdom. And this Aelred felt to the full. How many things were in array against him, keen arguments, tender delicacy, good feelings, to say nothing of pride and the love of ease ! Was the High Steward of Scotland to take his place as the lowest brother in an obscure convent ? the elegant scholar to take to digging ? the trim courtier to put on the coarse monkish cowl ? It was fanaticism to leave the sphere in which he had been placed, and where he might do good. It was ingratitude to leave the good king David, unfeeling to leave prince Henry, the companion of his youth. Besides which, he had a friend whom he loved more than life ; he does not tell us his name, but this was the sorest pain of all. Nothing but the full conviction that his soul was in danger where he was, could have enabled him to break away from so many ties.

And where was he to go, when he once turned himself on the wide world, and had given up the royal



palace in which he had lived from childhood. In those days there could be but one answer to the question, he could but be a monk. He might have been a secular priest ; but first of all, there were the mitre and crosier in the back-ground, which he dreaded ; and secondly, it would not have answered his purpose at all, for it would have left him in the midst of his friends with all the ties, from which it was his very design to break away. They knew the cloister and the world well, who made conversion a synonym for monastic life. It was a turning to God, heart and soul, when one who had dwelt in the world, and partaken of its pleasures, went into the cloister to learn to have no joy, but God alone.

Besides which, becoming a secular priest was by no means giving up the world, in the same sense as entering the cloister. It was not the same thing, and if Aelred was called by God's grace to the one, he was not to the other. It should never be forgotten that the middle age world was a very bad one ; it was better than its neighbours, but alas ! the world is the world in every age. The twelfth century was not a period of fantastic youth, like the fifteenth, nor was it the faithless, philosophic, calculating manhood of a period, about which the less, reader, that you and I say, the better ; it was rather like boyhood, petulant and quaint, in its waywardness. Its tournaments were the rough plays of grown up boys, ending it might be, in blood, seldom in ill-will ; its very policy was a very inartificial wiliness ; a ready lie, a shutting of ports against Pope's messengers, are specimens of it. And the Clergy had their world too, one, which would not have suited Aelred. The cathedral Clergy and the secular canons were in a bad state ; their rich benefices were spent in procuring the means of a sense-

less pomp. They were but little like ecclesiastics, those painted figures, on prancing horses, with gilded bits, embroidered saddles, and spurs plated with silver, while the rider himself with his flowing locks, invisible tonsure, and pelisse of various furs, with purple collar and fringe, like a woman's dress, remind us of the courtly abbé of later times.<sup>1</sup> As for ecclesiastics in general, Henry II.<sup>2</sup> would not have had a pretext for endeavouring to bring the Clergy into the secular courts if there had not been among them many criminals of the worst class ; and the decrees of councils in those times fully bear out the inference. The only way to reform such a system was to create an order of men, founded on an entirely opposite principle, to oppose voluntary poverty to riches, chastity to licentiousness, and obedience to insolence. An individual might indeed stay in the midst of the evil, and do his best to reform it ; but this was not enough, system must be opposed to system. In the monastic system is contained the remedial system of the church ; and this was the reason why in the twelfth century, regular canons so often replaced secular, in cathedral churches ; why the Premonstrants were founded with a direct bearing on the Clergy, and why the Augustinians were to such an extent reformed. The seculars indeed had their own work too ; among them arose almost the only martyr in the century, and that one was St. Thomas. Still the monks were the real reformers of the Church. And this was the reason of St. Bernard's impassioned language, by which he calls upon men to come into the cloister. It was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare

<sup>1</sup> St. Bern. Ep. i. 2. In Cant. xxxiii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> William of Newbridge, ii. 16.

ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight ; repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was the voice which sounded through Aelred's heart, and would not let him rest. So he did not go to Durham, where the monks served the stately cathedral, lately built by William of St. Carilefe ; nor did he go southward to Westminster, the Abbot of which was his friend, where was the sacred body of his beloved St. Edward ; but he chose out an obscure Cistercian monastery, the name of which was hardly known in the world.

It must have been with a heavy heart that Aelred bade adieu to Henry,<sup>1</sup> "that meek and pious man, of sweet spirit, and heart full of the milk of human kindness, him with whom he had lived from his cradle, his playfellow in boyhood, his companion in youth ; the good king David too, now an old man, whom he loved above all men ;" and many years afterwards the bitterness of that parting remained fresh in his soul, and he declared that "though he left them in body in order to serve his Lord, his heart was always with them." It must have been with a sad heart that he heard for the last time the bells of the Abbey of Scone, and saw at his feet the noble Tay winding through a vale, whose steep sides, clothed with thick woods, open upon a plain, where even then rose the towers of the fair town of Perth, the whole bounded by the blue outline, and the seamed sides of the Grampians. With a heavy heart did he quit Dunfermline, and retrace the still recent steps trodden by St. Margaret, on her painful way from the shore to the palace, and which even now after seven centuries of revolutions and estrangement, are uneffaced from the hearts of the

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred, *De Genealog.* ap. Twysden, 368.

people. Sadly he must have felt, when he turned his back on Dunfermline, with its expanse of sea glancing in the sun before him, and on the wide spread plain of Perth, for he was going to a place where the horizon was very circumscribed. Even now, we may follow his steps. There is in the North Riding of York, not far from the borders of Durham, a nook of surpassing beauty amidst a perfect labyrinth of vales, formed by ridges of hills, crossing each other in every direction. The place is one where three valleys meet, two of them shutting in a third, which is Rievaulx. Along the brow of the hill which overhangs this vale the traveller passes, and then goes down the steep side through hanging woods, from terrace to terrace, till at the very bottom, from the last ledge of all, he lights upon a ruined Abbey. Lovely indeed it is in its calm decay, rising to a stately height from the bosom of its smooth, grassy lawn, and most beautiful it must have been in the days of its magnificence, when the Abbey burst upon the sight, lying at the bottom of its deep dell, folded in from the world. Long before the traveller came upon it as he was winding down the successive steeps, it announced its presence by its sweet bells, and great was the joy of the tired wayfarer when it lay before him with its cloistered quadrangle, and over the long roof of the refectory and dormitory rose the lofty Church, with its light lancet windows towering over all. Beautiful it was in all the graceful and disciplined animation of monastic life ; its white monks issuing from its gates in their hooded riding mantles, to go to some distant grange, or working all together in a line on the hanging steeps, while the mill was heard, its wheel turning merrily amidst the splashing waters of the mountain-stream, which dashed along its pebbly bed at

the bottom of the dell, where it had just joined a sister stream at the fork where the valleys met. Alas ! it is very different now ; but we will not mourn over it ; there was a time when it was just as unlike the stately pile, still noble in its ruins, and that was on the morning of that day when the Abbey gates opened and closed on Aelred.

Many things there are in the middle ages, which look very beautiful at a distance, and were beautiful in reality, but which required something more than romance to make them tolerable. The crusades were a noble conception, but Blanche of Castile fainted when she saw the cross on St. Louis's shoulder, and Joinville durst not cast a look at his castle as he passed it, lest his heart should fail him, and he should return to his wife and children.

If there had been any portion of fine sentiment in Aelred's retirement to Rievaulx,<sup>1</sup> it would have disappeared now. Not one stone of the noble edifice, now in ruins, had then been raised ; not an approach to triple lancet, or rose window, or shaft with capital of twisted foliage. A very few years, probably not more than two had elapsed, since Walter de Espec had planted in this place a colony of Cistercians, sent by St. Bernard from Clairvaux, under William, their first abbot. Tradition in after times framed a romantic story about the foundation of the noble abbey, that Walter had brought the white monks from across the sea to pray for the soul of his son, a high-

<sup>1</sup> Rievaulx was founded in 1132. There are no data for ascertaining the precise time when St. Aelred left Scotland. It seems likely however that he did so before the foundation of the first Cistercian Monastery in Scotland, which was Melross. 1136.

spirited boy, who had been thrown from his horse at the foot of a little stone cross, by the road side, and had died on the spot. The truth however is, that Walter had no children, and gave a great part of his lands to the Church.<sup>1</sup> Blackmore was the ominous name of the place, which the Norman monks changed to the sweeter name of St. Mary of Rievaux, from the Rye, a little stream that ran through the valley. It is said to have been a place that made the soul shudder, and a vast wilderness, and Aelred himself in after times called it a very deep dale. It was a place hard to find, amidst the windings of the many valleys, and Aelred, after travelling along the high ridge, plunged down through a path cut in the tangled wood. Down and still further down, he went as though he were leaving the cheerful light of day. The old and gloomy trees seemed to close about him, and as he approached the bottom of the valley, the leaves were dripping with the damp mists which arose from the ill-drained marshy grounds around the little stream. But when he knocked at the lowly gate of the abbey, and the brother fell down at his feet, as was the wont in Cistercian abbeys, with a "*Deo gratias*," thanking God for the new-comer, then Aelred felt as if he had at last found a resting-place in this weary world. Then William the abbot, the friend of St. Bernard, welcomed the young Saxon to St. Mary's house ; and though their dark features were those of foreigners, and their language was that of enemies of his race, yet he felt that he was among brothers. The struggle for life and death was over, and he had but to go on in

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred expressly says so in his History of the War of the Standard.

the path which God had assigned to him. And now that it is over, we will give the description of it in his own words. It will show how he looked back upon it, when time had enabled him to think calmly about it, when he could lay bare his own mind, as St. Augustine did in his Confessions. "Lo ! my sweet Lord, once I sought rest in the world for my wretched soul, but every where I found toil and groans, grief and affliction of spirit. Thou didst cry out to me, Lord, Thou didst cry out, Thou didst call me, frighten me and break through my deafness, Thou didst smite and break down my obstinacy ; Thou didst bring sweetness to my bitter heart. I heard, but ah ! later than I ought, Thy voice crying to me ; for I lay, polluted and rolled in filth, bound, and a captive, in the nest of iniquity, crushed under the weight of inveterate habit. Then I bethought myself, who I was, where, and of what nature. I shuddered, Lord, and shrunk in fear, from my own lineaments ; the foul reflection of my wretched soul frightened me. I was displeasing to myself, because Thou wert pleasing. I fain would have fled from myself, and to Thee, but the merest trifles, as one has said before me,<sup>1</sup> the vanity of vanities, which had seduced my soul, held me back ; the chains of vile bodily habit bound me, the love of flesh and blood held me in bonds, the graces of social life tightened them ; above all there were the ties of a certain friendship, sweet to me above all the sweets of life. And men looking on my smiling outside, and knowing nothing of what was going on within, used to say of me, Oh ! how well is it with him, how well ! they did not know that all was wrong where alone all

<sup>1</sup> St. Aug. Conf. 8, 11.

ought to be right. For my wound was deep-seated within, tormenting, scaring me, and filling all within me with its intolerable corruption ; and unless Thou hadst stretched forth Thy hand, who knows if, intolerable burden as I was to myself, I might not have had recourse to the worst remedy of despair ! I began then to consider as much as one who had no experience could do, what great sweetness there is in Thy love, how much peace in that sweetness, how much security in that peace. By degrees Thou didst become sweet to my taste, still partially diseased as it was, and I used to say to myself, O ! that I were healed ; and I would raise myself up to Thee, but again I used to fall back upon myself. Still fleshly pleasures kept me as a man in chains, by a strange power of habit, though my soul really loved best that which it could yet only guess at by the power of its intellect. Often did I say to my friends, where are now all our pleasures, all our joys, all our delights ? at this moment how much of them do we feel ? all that is joyful in them is gone ; and all that remains is that part which stings our conscience, which causes us to fear death, which binds us to everlasting punishment. Put side by side with all our riches, our delights, and honours, this one thing which those who are Christ's possess, the right not to fear death. I loathed myself as I spoke this, and sometimes I wept in the bitter struggle of my soul. I loathed all that I saw, and still the habit of fleshly pleasure held me down. But Thou, who hearest the groans of the captives, who loosest those appointed unto death, Thou didst burst my chains ; Thou, who bringest publicans and harlots into Paradise, hast converted me, the chief of sinners, to Thyself. And lo ! I breathe again under Thy yoke, I am at rest under



Thy burden, for Thy yoke is easy, and Thy burden is light."<sup>1</sup>

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *The Battle of the Standard.*

It was fortunate for Aelred that he escaped when he did from the court of Scotland to his quiet home at Rievaulx. A very few years, probably hardly two, after he had made his profession, a storm gathered in Scotland, and swept over the north of England, such as would have effectually destroyed his quiet had he not already got into shelter. In 1136, Henry I. died, and then began the stormy reign of Stephen, disastrous for all England, but especially for the north. In this chapter then will come out the difference between the world and the cloister. The contrast is like that picture of the transfiguration, where Peter, James, and John are seen with the Lord in the Mount, round the base of which are heard the howlings of the poor demoniac, torn by the devil, whom even the Apostles cannot cast out, and apparently deserted even by the Lord. We will try to look upon this turmoil as Aelred would have done, nay, as he did, for he himself is the historian, from which the greater part is taken; and in the wildest fits of the storm, we may imagine him looking on quietly and listening with his head enveloped in his cowl in the cloister of Rievaulx.

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. i. 28.

Strange was the scene in England as soon as king Henry was dead ; law and justice in those times depended so much on individuals that the withdrawal of one man was a signal for general riot. Henry's power over his nobles was very much of a personal nature ; he had done what in the fifteenth century it cost a king of France a rebellion among his nobles before he could effect ; he had abridged their rights of chase in favour of the crown.<sup>1</sup> It was not an empty privilege, that of vert and venison in the broad forests of English oak, which covered the land ; besides the joys of the noisy chase, there were the huge branches of the oak to keep up the large fire in the baronial hall, and the substantial banquet of the boar's head and venison for the lord and his retainers. Henry had constituted himself protector-general of woods, forests, deer, wild boars, and game of all sorts.<sup>2</sup> Some men durst not hunt in their own woods, for fear of finding a king's officer at their doors, summoning them to appear at the chief pleas ; and if Henry's sharp eye discovered that a wood had been thinned or wasted, he would impose a fine on the offender. Hardly was the king dead than a joint attack on woods and forests took place, and a general onslaught was made on the large herds of deer, which a long reign had preserved, " so that hardly two could any where be seen together." The highway had always belonged to the king, as well as the forest, and all offences committed were punished by his officers, but now the king's peace was broken with im-

<sup>1</sup> v. Michelet. *Histoire de France*, xiii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen swore when he came to the throne *quod neminem de silvis propriis implacitaret licet venationem in eisdem caperet, sicut fecerat rex Henricus*. Brompton ap. Twysden, p. 1024.

punity, for there was no king to keep it. Every man preyed on his neighbour, and made the best of his time, men wiped off old scores, and revenged themselves on their enemies ; rapine and violence of all sorts reigned in England as soon as news came that the old king was dead. The matter was not much mended when Stephen, by the perjury of bishops and barons, was elected to the throne.<sup>1</sup> To do him justice, at the beginning of his reign, he seems certainly to have done his best to re-establish peace, but his title to the throne was defective, and when once the Empress landed, anarchy and confusion took their own course, and it was said emphatically that "there was no justice in Stephen's reign." Then arose a species of men, which feudalism had ever a tendency to create ; the petty lords, who, from their dungeon-keeps, ruthlessly wasted and harried the whole country around them. Our notions of feudal barons are ever connected with fair castles and trains of knights, fluttering pennons, and glittering armour. But the fact is that during the reigns of the first Norman kings, very few nobles were allowed to have castles.<sup>2</sup> It was from the lack of fortresses that England fell so soon into the power of the Conqueror ; and he built castles every where to keep the country in awe ; but then he kept them in his own hands, and his soldiers were only

<sup>1</sup> *Gesta Steph.* 929.

<sup>2</sup> Thus one Turgisius in Stephen's reign, holds a castle, and the country round, but it is said *rex ad conservandum magis quam ad possidendum commiserat*. *Gesta Steph.* p. 966. Thus of the castle of Exeter it is said, *quod semper regalis juris extiterat*. *Ibid*, 934. The Bishop of Durham asks leave to have a castle *Anglia Sacra*, 723, as also the Bishop of Salisbury and Ely in Henry the First's time.

warders not possessors. The manor house, and not the castle was then the characteristic of England ; magnificent Umbravilles and Bagots must as yet content themselves with a low moated house, two stories high, with its staircase outside, and only to rise by and bye to the dignity of a castle. But in king Stephen's time,<sup>1</sup> every man did as he pleased, or as he could, and when the day of reckoning came in Henry's time it was found that every knightling possessed not only a castle but a seal, like the king of England himself. Little do they know of these iron-hearted men, who picture to themselves a generous knight errant, pricking forth in search of adventures. Alas ! chivalry is but an ideal, a high and beautiful standard, created by Christianity, but never realized except in individuals ; for one St. Louis there were a thousand Bluebeards. The knight of the twelfth century was not the fantastic and often licentious champion of later times ; but in king Stephen's time at least he was often a needy adventurer, who roamed about the country, pillaging his neighbours, and looking out for a fief. Exceptions occur which cheer the weary reader of history, for instance that young Christian knight, who, as the beginning of the good deeds to which his vow of knighthood bound him, sheltered in his house a whole convent of forlorn monks, whose new-built monastery had been burnt over their heads.<sup>2</sup> But generally speaking your knight at the time of which we are writing was a very suspicious character. As for the nobles they were but too often men of brutal

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, i. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale v. p. 349. Dominus Rogerus de Molbray qui cingulum militare de novo sumpserat, inter initia bonorum operum suorum habitationem providit, &c.

licentiousness, great consumers of beef and wine, and great oppressors of the poor.<sup>1</sup>

When such men as these were let loose upon the world by the license of civil war, it was not wonderful that the defenceless Church should suffer. The churches were found to be excellent castles, ready made, without the trouble of building. Thus a certain Geoffrey Talbot seized on the cathedral church of Hereford, expelled the priests, and made it a garrison for his soldiers ; in the church-yard fortifications were thrown up, and the dead were torn from their graves, and their bodies thrown about, while a military engine was in full play on the tower, throwing large stones and missiles from the place "whence," says the chronicler, "the sweet and peaceful warnings of the bells were wont to be heard."<sup>2</sup> This is but one specimen of what often occurred ; and it will be easily believed that monasteries were not better treated than secular churches. The Abbeys of Ramsay and Coventry were turned into fortresses, and the monks expelled ; a nunnery at Winchester was burnt, and even the holy Abbey of St. Ethelreda, at Ely, was plundered by these wicked soldiers.<sup>3</sup> No place was safe from them, and the inmates of every monastery might prepare themselves each night at compline, for the possibility of being expelled from their homes before the bell sounded for matins.

All this took place south of the Tees, but the north of England was exposed to the inroads of a terrible enemy, and the ravages inflicted by these savages must have been more painful to Aelred, because they were

<sup>1</sup> Gesta Steph. 946.

<sup>2</sup> Gesta Steph. 948. 958.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. p. 79, 80. Gesta Steph. 960, 964.

let loose upon England by his best friend, David, king of Scotland. The friendship of David for Henry I., and his love for the family of his mother, and for his niece, the Empress, all induced him to take her part against Stephen. Her succession to the throne was looked upon as the restoration of the line of St. Edward to the English throne. King David, with all the barons of England, had sworn to King Henry that he would uphold his daughter, and he would not perjure himself as the others had done. Besides which he laid claim to the earldom of Northumberland for his son Henry. These motives might be enough to call for his invasion, but still it involved an awful responsibility to let loose upon the north the savage Picts. David would have been more like St. Louis had he paused before he put in motion this uncontrollable power ; but he was deceived by the Scottish party among his subjects, who played off his predilection for the Saxon line to urge him on against the Saxons of the north of England. But however this was, in the year 1136, not long after Aelred's conversion, news arrived that the Scottish army was coming over the border. On came the torrent, the chivalry of the Lowlands forming its centre, though far out-numbered by the motley assemblage of half-naked Galwegians, and men of the Isles. The miseries inflicted by a modern army, with all its discipline, are horrible enough, and a feudal army where each man was accounted for, and knew his banner was a scourge wherever it went ; but all this was nothing to the passage of a horde of undisciplined savages, most indifferent Christians at home, and giving loose to every passion which disgraces human nature

abroad. It can only be paralleled with the miseries inflicted by the mercenary troops of the 16th century,<sup>1</sup> when armies were no longer modelled on the feudal principle, and before the modern standing army had been introduced. The commissariat of a Pictish host was doubtless none of the best, and besides this, they had all the wanton cruelty with which the savage loves to torture his victim. It would be wrong to give the sickening detail of their cruelties ; suffice it to say that droves of captive women whom they had made widows and childless, driven before them with spears, formed the van of this horrible army. This mass when once set in motion was beyond the controul of him who had called these uncouth beings out of their native morasses. Churches were burnt and pillaged, and monasteries sacked, in one case, which has happened to remain on record, the poor monks of Calder, in Copeland, were turned out on the wide world, with their whole property contained in a wagon, drawn by eight oxen ; and this was doubtless not a singular instance. The only alleviation to this misery was, that David placed a guard of his own soldiers over Hexham, and all the miserable inhabitants who had taken refuge there. He also gave back into the hands of the Prior of Hexham all that part of the booty of the wretched country which had fallen to his share. Hexham was Aelred's old home, and this probably crossed David's mind when he chose it as a place of sanctuary for Northumberland. One other softer feature amidst this scene of horrors is the circumstance that William, Abbot of Rievaulx, was chosen to give into the hands of the king of Scotland the town of Wark, which belonged to

<sup>1</sup> V. Manzoni, *Promessi Sposi*.

Walter de Espec, the founder of the monastery. 'In his white habit he might venture in safety as a messenger of peace through the Scottish army ; and it must have been a strange sight to see the Abbot at the head of the haggard inhabitants of the town, who had been reduced by famine to feed on pickled horse-flesh, issuing from the gates to deliver up the keys to the conqueror.

The stream of invaders was rapidly moving on towards Rievaulx, when it was stopped by an event long afterwards celebrated in the annals of border warfare—the battle of the Standard. Aelred's dearest friends, David of Scotland and Henry, were engaged in it, and yet he could not wish them to conquer. Besides, his affections were divided, for on the other side was Walter de Espec, the founder of Rievaulx, his new home, and so from the bottom of his deep-hidden valley he prayed with his brethren for the success of the English arms ; and when it was over he became the chronicler of an action which saved Yorkshire with its churches and monasteries from desolation. It was a very crusade, this war of the Standard, for it was apparently a hopeless task to attempt to stop the progress of the countless swarms which David had brought out of Scotland. But the old Archbishop of York implored the nobles and knights of Yorkshire, for the love of God and His Saints, to venture their lives, to save from desolation the houses of God, and the poor people from all the horrors which were awaiting them. Aelred becomes enthusiastic when he describes the dark hair, broad forehead, and large piercing eyes of Walter de Espec, and details at length the eloquence of the noble soldier when he addressed the soldiers from the foot of the Standard, and promised them



victory, in the name of the Saints and of the Lord. Their standard was a long pole, on which floated the banner of St. Cuthbert, and from which was suspended a pix containing the Body of the Lord ; and under this, they swore to conquer or die. Aelred describes on the day of battle, the small compact body of the English, with their armour glittering in the sun, and their pennons floating on their lances, while the priests in their white albs flew from rank to rank to exhort them. The Bishop of the Orkneys blessed and absolved them, and the whole army answered his benediction with a loud Amen. Then the trumpets sounded, and with a wild shriek the Galwegians came on, but their countless host was broken before the serried ranks of the men-at-arms, around which they closed as the waves dash against the rock, which is islanded amongst them. They might at length have broken this little band, but their headlong valour was rendered useless by the incessant clouds of arrows discharged from the bows of the Yorkshire yeomanry. However at the moment that they were yielding, the battle was again rendered doubtful, for with the speed of lightning Henry, prince of Scotland, charged with the chivalry of the Scottish army ; and here Aelred's love for the friend of his youth betrays itself, and he almost seems to cheer them on as they broke through "the lines of the Southrons as they would sweep aside a cobweb," and pursued them off the field.<sup>1</sup> But still poured on the steady ceaseless showers of the English arrows, and when Henry returned from the pursuit he saw the royal standard, the Dragon, moving off the field in full flight, and found that he was left almost alone with a

<sup>1</sup> De bello Stand. Twysden 345.

few knights about him. And here again amidst his joy for the victory which God had given to the prayers of His church, Aelred pauses to describe the valour of the friend of his youth, how prince Henry, seeing himself left with a few knights about him, turned with a smile to his companions, bade them mingle in the pursuit, as though they were on the English side, and setting spurs to his horse, rode right through the enemy to rejoin his father. This battle freed the north of England from this horrid scourge, and it must be said for David, that when afterwards Northumberland and Durham were ceded to him, the north was resting in peace, while the south was still suffering all the misery of civil war.<sup>1</sup>

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## CHAPTER V.

### *The Cistercian Novice.*

SUCH was the world outside the walls of Rievaulx, during the few years after Aelred first became a monk, and such the world in which he must from his connexion with the court of Scotland have mingled, had he not taken timely refuge in his monastery. Strangely different indeed was his new mode of life from that which he led in the palace of Scone or of Dunfermline. Certainly the good monks of Citeaux showed no anxiety to sweeten the harshness of the rule for their novices. For four days the new comer was kept like a stranger in the hospice, and no one took notice of

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, i. 22.

him after his first interview with the Abbot ; and then he was introduced into the chapter, where he prostrated himself on the ground before the Abbot, and was saluted by him with an abrupt, "What wouldest thou?" Then was detailed to him the rule in all its rigour, and if he persisted in asking for admission, the Abbot said aloud, "God who hath begun in thee, bring it to the end:" then all the convent answered Amen. Still the candidate was led back to the house of the guests, and the same ceremony was repeated in the chapter for three days, and on the third only was he admitted into the number of the novices. Then his secular dress, the soft clothing of the king's house was taken off him, with the words, "The Lord put off thee the old man with his works." And then the novice's dress was put upon him ; it had not even the dignity of the cuculla and scapular of the full-grown monks ; it was a short tunic with sleeves, and a white cloak with a cowl.<sup>1</sup> If a nobleman were suddenly to find himself arrayed in the dress of a workhouse, the change could not be more complete. But the Abbot as he put it on the novice said, "The Lord put upon thee the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This reconciled Aelred to the change, for in these words were contained the whole of monastic life, and of this all its outward forms were but symbols. Death to nature and life to God, and the carrying out of the vows of baptism, was the moral of the whole. Without this, fast and vigil, rough labour in the fields or beautiful ritual, with vestment of black, brown, white, or grey, were but quaint devices of fantastic devotion, and "friar's trumpery." Alas ! there

<sup>1</sup> Nom. Cist. 218. Rituale Cist. vi. 1.

have been worldly and ambitious hearts, beating beneath the monk's habit, for no outward forms can keep the soul against its will ; but Rievaulx was not at all a likely place to harbour such monks. And at all events Aelred, with whom alone we are concerned, looked upon himself as assuming the cross for a life-long crusade against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

“Let the novice begin and leave off labour, read, and go to bed, with the monks ; let him eat the same food, and be clad with the same stuff,” says the rule. We therefore know at once what Aelred was about ; he plunged without delay into Cistercian discipline ; and an exceeding trial it must have been. To any one brought up in a king's palace, the details of husbandry must have been inexpressibly irksome ; and not only must the novice dig, but he must dig well, for the livelihood of the monks depends on their own exertions. The delicate and jewelled fingers, accustomed only to turning over the leaves of illuminated manuscripts, must have been sorely galled with the spade and the fork. This however, together with the whole discipline of fasts and vigils, he must have expected before he came ; the man who has fled for his life to the wilderness must not expect to find its wild and sour fruits like the summer-fruit in a king's garden ; thorns and briers grow in the desert ; we must look elsewhere for lilies and roses. But one thing there was from which human nature recoils most of all : he was not at all treated as the late High Steward of Scotland, one who had made a great present to religion by his change. He was only brother Aelred, the lowest of the novices, because the last comer, last in every thing, except in processions, where, with his short tunic and sleeveless cloak, and his flowing locks, he preceded the long

line of shaven crowns and scapulars, because the lowest walked first. It is a hard thing for one who has been considered rather as teacher than learner all his life, to find himself, when grown up, at the feet of others ; and the years between twenty and thirty are not always the period when men are most docile. The cell of the novices was a portion of the monastery adjoining the cloister, and here they were trained by the master of the novices, an officer who was to teach them to know the Psalter by heart, and to train them in monastic discipline. Aelred could doubtless have instructed this officer in Cicero and in writing Latin, but he submitted to him with the docility of a child, for he knew well that the science of spiritual things required no learning or intellectual power.

When he had a little recovered from his bewilderment at the novelty of his situation, and found leisure to look about him, he was struck with the wonderful peace of this little cloister-world, the noiseless gliding motion of the brethren, as they bent their heads in silence when they passed each other in the cloisters, and the strange way in which one soul seemed to actuate this vast body. And this was what first struck our novice ; it was good hard work in which they were engaged, and yet "with such a placid unruffled countenance, with such a holy noiseless order, did they do all things, that scarce did they seem to move at all."<sup>1</sup> And then their mysterious preternatural silence had something awful about it ; for it was very unlike a dogged or sullen silence, and this was evident from the bright beaming countenances of the brethren, and the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. Petri de Roya at the end of St. Bernard's Letters, ed. Ben.

ready cheerfulness in which they helped one another in their respective works. No man seemed to have a will of his own ; and Aelred thought that he had seen at last the realization of his dreams of friendship. At first, amongst such a number all seemed to him very much alike ; all had the same white habit, and even the same cast of countenance ; just as in a foreign country, till the eye gets accustomed to the type of the new race, all seem equally dark or equally fair, without much difference. By degrees however he learned to distinguish between the countenances about him, and one in particular struck him. It was the face of a man, much younger than those of equal rank in the monastery with himself, which showed that he must have been hardly more than a child when he took the vow. The grave sweetness of his face, and the depth of the recollection and silence of the young monk struck Aelred ; and he learned (probably from the master of the novices, whose business it was at times to converse with his charge,) that the monk's name was Simon, and that his conversion was a miracle of God's grace. As a mere boy, God had called him away from his kindred and his home, to serve Him as a monk. What the circumstances were are not known ; probably Aelred did not know them himself ; he only knew that Simon was of noble blood, and had left his father's house. Men wondered what could attract him in monastic life at that early age ; " but He knew, says Aelred,<sup>1</sup> who was leading thee on, who had set on fire thy yet tender heart with the flame of His love, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments.<sup>2</sup> He went before thee, beautiful in form above

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. i. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Song of Solomon, i. 3.

the sons of men, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments. He went before thee, that One who was lowly in spirit, over the steeps and over the mountains, sprinkling thy path with the fragrance of myrrh and frankincense, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments. Before thee a Child went, the Child Jesus, showing thee the manger of His poverty, the couch of His lowliness, the chamber of His love, filled with the flowers of His grace, and sprinkled with the unguent of His consolation, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments." Such was Aelred's way of accounting for the strange fact that a place, like Rievaulx, possessed attractions for such a child ; and now in the beginning of his noviciate, he found it of use to look upon this monk, who was utterly unconscious of the admiration which he was exciting. When his eyes and his thoughts wandered in the choir, one glance at the modest face of Simon chaunting devoutly with his eyes fixed on the ground was enough to recall him to himself. There was no danger in this mute veneration and love, for Cistercian strictness forbade his addressing Simon, and it was of use to him to choose this youthful monk for his model. "The rule of the order," says he, "forbade our speaking, but his countenance spoke to me, his gait spoke, and his very silence spoke. The sight of his humility beat down my pride, this contemplation of his calmness repressed my restless spirit."

After a year of probation, novices were admitted to make their profession : this was the real farewell to the world, where was made the vow of obedience, of stability, and of conversion of life according to the rule of St. Benedict. For a year before, the novice had

counted the cost, and now he felt sure that by God's grace he could keep what it was beyond the strength of the natural man to do. It was with a chastened and a holy joy that Aelred now bent before the Abbot to receive his benediction as a monk. And well he might rejoice, for to him had been given a grace, which but very few could possess. The world must go on, bad as it is, till it please God to destroy it, and in its miserable service must toil on even the good till its end. But Aelred, God had called out of the world, and had made it lawful for him to quit the distractions of the painful scene, and to serve Him not indirectly through actions ~~in themselves indifferent~~, but like the angels with perpetual acts of prayer and praise. The whole was the act of God's grace, and therefore the hymn for Whitsuntide, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, was then always sung by the convent, and the beautiful ritual every where prays to the Holy Spirit, who alone with the Father and Son is the Giver of all grace, and without whom nothing is strong and holy. And then after the long hair which the novice had till that moment kept, as he would wear it in the world, had been cut off his head by the Abbot, and he was dressed in the regular monastic garment, he went round the convent and humbled himself at the feet of each of his brethren. After which the *Te Deum* was entoned, and whilst it was sung, the newly made monk knelt behind the Abbot, his hands crossed on his breast within the sleeves of his habit. From this time forth he took his place in the choir with the other monks.

Henceforth, even during the stormy time which we described in the last chapter, so peaceful was the tenor of his life, that hardly any thing is known of Aelred, but all that remains of him is of the same



cast as has gone before. He is still the same gentle, loving Aelred, under the white habit, as he had been in the world. When he sat in the Abbey garden, as he says himself, his chief delight was to look about him, and think that each of the mute white figures, walking among the trees, was a brother, and to wonder how it was possible that so many men of different countries, tempers and ages, could dwell together in such perfect peace. If they did not talk, they had no chance of quarrelling, is doubtless a ready answer ; and yet Aelred was right, it was a phenomenon. Men will manage to quarrel, if they have a mind ; and besides, monks and nuns did find ample opportunities of discord, whenever it suited them ; and it was this quarrelsomeness, and not other sins more commonly ascribed to them, which was the besetting sin of convents. Cluny had been not long before split into parties under Abbot Pontius ; and even Cistercians, alas ! in after times must needs call in the judgments of popes and legates to settle their internal dissensions. It is evident that monks when they lose the spirit of their order must be quarrelsome. The very object of Monasticism is to give a proper outlet to devotional feelings, which are stifled in the world, because it would be fanatical to indulge them ; it must therefore be made up to a great extent of external actions. To throw oneself at the feet of another, and call oneself a miserable sinner, in a convent is a part of the rule. But when such actions are done by cold-hearted or discontented men, they become technical and formal ; and punctilious persons are ever most disposed to quarrel. Besides, there might be proud brethren even amidst the austerities of Cîteaux ; and let any one consider the heart-burnings of an ambitious monk, when brother so-and-so was made Prior or Sub-

prior over his head, or was sent on a mission, or allowed to accompany the Abbot to the general chapter ; it was enough to sour a whole convent. Again, it is not quite true that monks never spoke to each other. A perfect silence is enjoined by the rule at certain times ; especially from compline to prime next morning, at refectory, in church and in the cloister, not a word was spoken under severe penalties ; but this implies that there was a less strict silence at other times. When at work, monks might speak to each other, if it was necessary for what they were about. An awkward monk might be reproved by his fellow, or they might differ in opinion, and any one who has tried, may know how hard it is to yield simply for the sake of peace. Aelred therefore was perfectly right in wondering how a large convent of three hundred monks, for such was the number of the brethren of Rievaulx, could hold on its even course without bickerings and quarrels ! Sometimes Aelred had a specimen of a slight fit of ill temper, just to assure him that such things were possible ;<sup>1</sup> but if monks would be cross, they had also their own way of smoothing crossness down. One day, he spoke a word which offended one of the brethren, and at once he fell at his feet to beg his pardon, and waited there till the monk raised him up. And this seems to have been the established conventual method of settling a dispute.<sup>2</sup>

Besides which, it appears that license was sometimes given by Abbots to certain of the brethren to converse together ;<sup>3</sup> and in this way Aelred at length was

<sup>1</sup> De Spir. Ami. ii. 453.

<sup>2</sup> Spec. Char. i. 29.

<sup>3</sup> See note to Life of St. Stephen, p. 140 ; to which add Spec. Char. iii. 40.

allowed to speak to Simon, the young monk, whom he had from the first proposed as his model. It is curious that the Cistercians do not seem to have been so jealous of particular friendships in their communities as were other orders. It was a first principle in monastic life that each individual should devote himself body and mind to the service of his brethren. The monastic system was an expansion of the love of the domestic circle upon a large community ; it was a supernatural home raised by Christianity out of man's natural affections, an expansion of the narrowed sphere of usefulness allowed to most men in the world. It was necessary then that all within that circle should share this love alike. In a large family, if not carefully brought up, the eldest often know little of the youngest ; they naturally form into knots, and the petty factions quarrel with each other. And so it would be in a monastery, which is only a very large family, if the father Abbot was not watchful to prevent an evil, which every careful mother would banish from her home. Thus, if brother Ambrose and brother Benedict were to swear a deathless friendship, and to put their black cowls together in recreation-time, and never talk to any one else, the other brethren might well think themselves aggrieved. And if the same brethren were to proceed also to sit together in cloister, and to nod and wink, when they could not talk, if they were discontented and cross when the Prior set them to work in different parts of the grounds of the monastery, then the father Abbot would have just cause for punishing the refractory brethren. Human love, if not submitted to rules, is a wayward, fantastic, moonstruck thing, flitting from object to object, and never satisfied ; or if fixed upon one in a wrong way, over-

leaping the bounds of law, human and divine. It is like an organ of which every fool may take out the trumpet stop, and bring forth a volume of wild discordant sounds ; but which, when played by rule, discourses most healthful music. Now in a Cistercian monastery, at least at the period when Aelred entered Rievaulx, this same unmanageable element was subjected to such stringent rules that there was little danger of its doing mischief. Where there was no regular recreation-time, and where the brethren never conversed but by license from the father Abbot, and those licenses were few and far between, there was no danger that the spirit of exclusiveness should creep into a convent, for the brethren could not possibly form cabals amongst themselves. No ambitious monk could form a party and intrigue to be elected Abbot ; no harm could come to monastic discipline by heart-burnings and jealousies, breaking out at length into open rebellion, from being long brooded over, when the cowl was drawn over the head, and none could see the workings of the discontented heart upon the face. Aelred could therefore love Simon without fixing his heart upon him with a merely natural friendship. In the painful struggle with himself, before he quitted the world, his affections had been crucified, and they could now revive and flourish again in the cloister. The period of his internal struggles was a long and cheerless winter, during which his heart was "like a tree withered down to its roots. But now that this winter was past, and that all was dead that God would have had die, then came the happy springtide and all revived." That took place in him which we will describe in the words of our old friend the Archbishop of Cambray, for we are not skilled in spiritual matters

ourselves. "God then gives back friendship with all his other gifts an hundred-fold. Then revive all the old loves for true friends. A man no longer loves them in himself, and for himself, but in God, and for God, and that with a love, lively, tender, full of sweetness and of feeling, for God can easily purify feeling. It is not feeling but self-love which corrupts friendship." So Aelred gave himself up without scruple to his holy friendship, for it was God, who by the order of His Providence, bound them together, and inspired them with His love ; and it was Him whom they loved in each other.<sup>1</sup>

Aelred's talents and his loving disposition did not escape the penetrating eye of Abbot William. The friend of St. Bernard could not but love one, whom posterity, by a sort of unconscious judgment, has called "a second Bernard ;" so he made him the master of the novices. Next to the Abbot this was the most important officer in the convent. His business, as has been said before, was to train the novices in monastic discipline, that is, not to teach them to chant Gregorian tones, to march in procession, no, nor even to fast, and to rise in the night to sing psalms. All these were but means to an end ; his business was to form a character in them. The method of forming a Christian character has now been almost reduced to a science, for the ways of God in His dealings with the souls of His elect, have so much uniformity, with all their variety, that a science of spiritual life has been framed out of the reflections of holy men on their own experience. This science has now spread far and wide, and forms a regular portion of clerical education in

<sup>1</sup> Fenelon, *Utilité des peines et des délaissements*, 23.

most parts of Christendom ; but in Aelred's time it was almost confined to the cloister. Very little had been written on the subject till St. Bernard's time, for in early times these Christian writers had been so occupied with the great object of faith itself, that they had comparatively little analyzed the dealings of God's grace with the Christian soul. The cloister then was a sort of traditionary system of ascetic discipline, and this was what the Cistercians had revived through the influence of St. Bernard. Aelred's duty was thoroughly to learn the character of the novice, to support him in heaviness of spirits, to temper his enthusiasm, to judge of his vocation, and if he saw that God had called him to that state of life, to present him at the end of his year of probation to the Abbot. The whole of Aelred's teaching consisted in patience and resignation to the will of God. When first the young novice came into the monastery full of fervour, he was delighted and edified with all he saw. Even the rough bed and coarse food, and the bell bidding him start up when his sleep was sweetest, were all but child's play to him ; the awful silence did not frighten him, and though he could but speak to three men, the Abbot, the prior, and the master, all seemed natural and easy to him.<sup>1</sup> Every thing struck him with admiration, but above all, the wonderful concord of the brethren. "Such unity is there among the brethren," said a wondering novice to Aelred, "that each thing belongs to all, and all things to each. And what marvellously pleases me, there is no acceptation of persons, no account of high birth. How wonderful is it too that the will of one man

<sup>1</sup> *Tribus solum hominibus et hoc rarissime et vix de necessariis loquimur. Spec. Char. lib. ii. 17.*

should be the law to about three hundred men, so that what once he has spoken, is kept by all, as if they had come to precisely that determination themselves, or had heard it from the mouth of God Himself." This was the first stage of feeling in the novices, and the prudent master of the novices was obliged with a smile to tell him, <sup>1</sup> "I would have thee be cautious, and not suppose that any profession upon earth is without its hypocrites, lest if thou shouldest see any one transgress in word or deed, thou shouldest disturb thyself, as though something strange had happened to thee." And to this first ecstatic stage of wonderment succeeded generally a great calm, when the soul was conscious of no feeling at all, when there was no sensible pleasure in prayer, no tears in contemplating the Passion, or ecstasy in thinking on the love of God. And then the poor novice wondered why he did not feel now that he was in religion, the same sensible joys that he used to feel when in the world. Then Aelred would tell him that the love of God did not consist in sensible joys, but in the junction of the will to the will of God, in the surrender of the human will so that it consents to wish for nothing but because God wills it. "Pure love is in the will alone, so that it is not a love of feeling, for the imagination has no part in it ; it is a love which loves without feeling, as pure faith believes without seeing."<sup>2</sup> He told him that it was a greater sacrifice thus to offer up the will to God, and to remain quietly as long as He would in this want of feeling, than to fast and afflict the body with austerities, and that nothing was so agreeable to God as to remain

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Fenelon sur la secheresse et les distractions, 26.

thus crucified, not seeking for consolation till it was His will to give it. "These sensible consolations were given at the beginning of thy repentance," he would say to the novice, "to draw thee on to Christ; but what wonder if, now their work is done, they are taken away? now is the time for warfare, not for rest, but by and bye, it may be that the Lord will restore these sensible affections, and thus that devout feeling, which at first roused thee, to save thee from perishing, will console thee in thy labour, lest thou sink under it, till after many victories, the pains by which thou art, now in thy noviciate, harassed, will be entirely lulled, and then, like a soldier, whose warfare is done, thou wilt taste the sweets of repose, and be admitted to that consolation of which the Prophet speaks, 'How great is Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee.'"<sup>1</sup>

This is a specimen which has reached us of Aelred's teaching as master of the novices. Doubtless he had many more unpromising novices to deal with than that one whom he has here recorded. Doubtless he had the presumptuous novice, who thought nothing too high for him, who must needs think the order not half strict enough, and would separate himself from his brethren by fasting and watching when the others did not.<sup>2</sup> To this one he would say that strict obedience was the first condition of being a monk at all. Sometimes however he had still more refractory subjects to deal with, and a story remains, which, though it does not rest on very good authority, yet shows the sort of character which tradition assigned to Aelred. There was a clerk, says the legend, who, when he had been a short time at

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. lib. ii. 19.      <sup>2</sup> St. Bern. Sermon in Cant. 19.



Rievaux, began to grow tired of the strictness and monotony of the place, and determined to run away and go back to the world. Aelred, however, loved him and begged of God to give him this soul. So the poor novice came to him, and frankly said, that he was going to run away, but Aelred coolly replied, "Brother, ruin not thyself ; nevertheless thou canst not if thou wouldst." Still the man would not listen to reason, and went away from the monastery. He plunged into the woods, and wandered about among the mountain paths from valley to valley, thinking all the while that he was going very far from the Abbey. About sunset, however, he was surprised to find himself close to a convent, which looked marvellously like the Abbey of Rievaux, and sure enough so it was ; he had been wandering round and round it all day, and at evening he found himself precisely where he had started. It had been hidden from him by the thick woods about it. This circumstance struck him as so wonderful that he could only see the hand of God in it. So he entered again the monastery which he had quitted, he thought for ever (in the morning) The first person whom he saw was Aelred, who fell on his neck and bursting into tears, kissed him, and said, "Son, why hast thou done so to me ? Lo ! I have wept for thee with many tears ; and I trust in God that as I have asked of the Lord, and as I told thee, thou shalt not perish."

## CHAPTER VI.

*The Spirit of Cîteaux.*

AELRED, however, soon had other employment assigned him ; he was compelled by his Abbot to turn author.<sup>1</sup> It appears that certain monks of other orders censured the Cistercians as being dry, formal, unspiritual men ; devotion they thought was incompatible with so much affliction of the body, hard beds, coarse food and manual labour. Theirs was a more smiling religion, which had all the arts at her command, painting, sculpture, and music ; and why should the Cistercians be more strict than their neighbours ? Now this accusation could hardly be made in France, where St. Bernard was taken as a type of the Cistercians, for dry and formal were the very last epithets that could be applied to him. No one could read a line of his writings without feeling their unction and sweetness.<sup>2</sup> As for his decisions in casuistry some might have called him lax, so fully does he hold that a really conscientious intention supplies material defects. None could therefore with any face accuse the French Cistercians of an unspiritual harshness. In England, the new order wanted some one to be its type in the same way, and Aelred was chosen as being the very man to set it forth.<sup>3</sup> Much did he pray to be excused ; he said that he was ill educated, had left school early, and had come straight from a king's kitchen to the desert, where,

<sup>1</sup> V. Ep. cujusdam prefixed to the Speculum, and Spec. Char. lib. ii. 5.      <sup>2</sup> V. Ep. 69, 603.      <sup>3</sup> V. Ep. cujusdam.

like a common peasant, he worked for his daily bread among rocks and mountains with the axe and the mallet, by the sweat of his brow. Nothing however would do, the Abbot only chid his tardiness in obedience, and said that his stewardship in a king's kitchen was only an anticipation of the time when he was to be a steward of spiritual food to his brethren ; and as for rocks and mountains, there might come honey from the stony rock, and more was to be learnt under the shade of the trees at mid-day in the woods about Rievaux than in the schools of worldly philosophy. So write a book he must. It was to be called the *Mirror of Charity*, in which the form of Christian love was to be reflected as in a glass. Hugh, the Prior, had often heard him talk on such subjects, and knew that he was the very man. So Aelred was deputed to write, and a remarkable book it is, considering the time at which it was brought out, while the Scotch were at the gates of Rievaux, during a civil war, in which an empress lost and won a throne, and a king was in prison. When all the world was in arms, bishops and all ; when monasteries were in flames, and cathedrals were turned into castles, this monk was sitting quietly in his cloister, writing on the love of God.

It was a perfect reflection of the Cistercian spirit this *Mirror of Charity*, and a good comment upon its code of laws, the *Chart of Charity*. The aim of the Cistercian reform was to introduce a more spiritual religion into the cloister. Monks had begun to expend their religious feelings in the externals of devotion. The eleventh century had been a time of deadly struggle with the powers of the world ; its great men were men of action like St. Gregory, and its good monks were half hermits, like St. Peter Damian. It

was a time of travail and of labour, for the old world was gone, and the new middle age world was in process of formation. Men were just recovering from the wild fright into which the close of the first thousand years of the Christian era had thrown them ; their panic had broken out in frantic gestures, so that men and women danced<sup>1</sup> hand in hand over the graves in the churchyard like the dances of death in the fifteenth century. And after their recovery they took to building churches, it was the first sign of revival, the fashionable religion, so to speak, of the day. Men and women formed themselves into companies, and marched together to the building of a new church, with banners carried before them. Knights and nobles yoked themselves to carts to carry stones to the new edifice. The utmost splendour of worship of course was the natural consequence of the erection of these splendid edifices, for lofty naves and beautiful choirs were not built to be left in nakedness like vast sepulchres. Images of saints and angels, in all the warmth of colour and gilding, peopled them on high,<sup>2</sup> and the long train of splendid vestments moved in glittering order amongst the worshippers. This was all as it should be in secular churches, nay, it was well even in monasteries if this graceful and glowing external life of religion was not too busy for the interior and hidden life of the soul. The two schools need not have clashed, but that they did so is certain, for these ancient monasteries found fault with the new school, which arose amongst them on the grounds that there was a real opposition between an austere life and spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Fordun, vii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Quo sanctior eo coloratio St. Bern. Apol. ad Guil.

joy, and that a splendid external religion was essential to internal devotion. They were perhaps conscious that it was so in themselves, and so they attacked their younger brethren, telling them that joyousness and love were essential to religion, and were incompatible with the great austerities which they practised.

Aelred's *Mirror of Charity* therefore is intended to reflect an image of the love of God, the conception of which had been so strangely disfigured. "The love of God," he says, "is the Holy Spirit within us." Considered as a habit in our souls, it is a perfect union of our will with that of God, so that we wish for nothing but what He wishes. It is not feeling, it is not intellect, it is not joy, it is not reasoning ; it is this ineffable union with God, who is not an idea, but a real living God, the source of all joy and all intellect. As man however has fallen, this love must be raised out of the death of nature, and this was the reason of the Cistercian austerities ; they were means to an end, to set up the cross of Christ within the soul, and they were useful as far as they procured the perfect resignation of the will. And how can this be effected, asks the Cistercian, where all things tend to dissipate the mind and expend its energies on external things, when in the cloister are found picturesque animals to amuse the eyes of the brethren ; quails and curious birds, tame hares gambolling about, and stags browsing under the trees.<sup>1</sup> There is the same dissipation when the walls of monastic churches are covered with paintings of men and horses fighting, and pagan stories taken from classic history, when the pavement is of marble, covered with rich carpets, and the worship is carried on with a glare of

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 23, 24.

wax lights, amid the glitter of gold and silver vessels ; or when again, instead of the grave and masculine Gregorian chants, languid and effeminate music was used, or else the loud organ imitated the crash of thunder to the wonder of the gaping crowd below. "Meanwhile," says Aelred, "the crowd stands trembling and astonished, wondering at the sound of the bellows, the clash of cymbals, the harmony of pipes, yet when they look at the contortions of the singers and their imitation of female voices, they cannot help laughing. You would fancy that they had come not to an oratory, but to a théâtre, not to pray, but to a spectacle. They fear not that tremendous majesty near which they are brought, they have no reverence for that mystic manger, at which they are ministering, where Christ is mystically wrapt in swaddling-clothes, where His most sacred blood is poured in the chalice, where the heavens are opened and angels are standing near, where earthly things are joined with heavenly, and men are the companions of angels."

The love of God consists not in these external things ; it does not consist even in the joys of the interior life, but in the conformity of the soul with the passion of Christ, in the crucifixion of the whole man. The soul must patiently wait upon Him, not forcing itself to feel joy and sorrow, but resting in faith upon God, ready to be filled with His joys, when He wills, and willing to remain in spiritual dryness as long as He wills. "Nevertheless," says Aelred, <sup>1</sup>"who so presumptuous as to affirm that communion with the passion of Christ is incompatible with His Spirit, and lessens the grace of spiritual sweetness. He is joined to Christ's passion,

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 6.

who bows himself beneath the discipline of the cloister, and mortifies his flesh by fasts, labour, and watchings, who submits his will to another's judgment," and who, when tried by internal temptations, which are more severe than any corporal mortifications, commits himself into the hands of the Lord to suffer what He wills. He must not be ever looking out for miracles to prove his acceptance as was the case with many in those days, he must wait quietly for consolation from on high.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup>" But when the soul is in this state, beset with fear, harassed with grief, cast down by despair, swallowed up by sadness, grieved by spiritual sluggishness, there will come down upon it a drop of wondrous sweetness, from the unguent of that copious mountain, that high-raised mountain : noiselessly and peacefully it drops down upon the soul. At the brightness of its radiant light, all that cloud of irrational feelings melts away ; before its sweet taste, all bitterness disappears, the heart expands, the hungry soul is fed, and it feels within it a strange upward power, which seems to bear it on high. Thus by fear sloth is kept away ; and by the taste of heavenly sweetness, fear is tempered. Lest the soul should be content to remain in a low and sluggish state, fear rouses it ; but if it faints in its labours, it is sustained by its feeling. By these alternations it is continually schooled, till the whole soul, absorbed by that ineffable love, burning for the long-desired embrace of Him who is fairer than the children of men, begins to wish to be dissolved and to be with Christ.<sup>3</sup> But know well that, if ever the mercy of Thy Creator pour upon thee a single drop of His sweetness, it depends not on thy will, when it should come to

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 24.    <sup>2</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 12.    <sup>3</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 15.

thee, nor in what way, nor how much thou canst keep of it. When thou hast tasted this spiritual sweetness, be not straightway sunk down in sloth, for soon there will rise up by thy side a spiritual enemy, and he is not to be conquered by sloth, but by prayers. Then after numberless contests, thou shalt be taken on high to receive thy reward, and thy soul will enter into the glory of God, where thou wilt be fed with the fruit of the promises. The fire of heavenly love will burn up the yoke of earthly concupiscence, and thou shalt rest in the brightness of wisdom, in the sweetness of heavenly contemplation, and know of a truth that the yoke of the Lord is sweet and his burden light."

Such was Aelred's doctrine, and he had soon need enough of resignation to the will of God, for while he was engaged in writing this work, his friend Simon died. So full is he of his grief that he quits his subject, and pours his heart out in expressions of grief. His mirror of charity is a home-book ; it was meant for the cloister, and for brethren to read. In one place he tells us that he had offended one of the brethren in the morning, and how the thought of it grieved him. And now that he had lost his friend, it seems to have been a relief to him to put all his thoughts on paper. For eight years Simon had been suffering from ill health ; and for a whole year, foreseeing that his end was approaching, he had withdrawn within himself, and seemed forgetful of all external things, "even of me," says Aelred. It appears that he had been sent away from Rievaulx, probably for his health, and Aelred was not with him when he died. His body however was brought to his own monastery, and Aelred had just come from his funeral, when he wrote these words, "O grave, where is thy victory ? O death, where is thy



sting ? Where thou seemest to have done him some hurt, there thou hast exalted him. Upon me then has all thy venom been expended, and in aiming at him, thou hast inflicted dreadful wounds upon me. It is on me, that has fallen all the grief, all the bitterness, all the sorrow ; for the guide of my path, the rule of my conversation has been taken from me. But how is it, O my soul, that thou didst so long look upon the funeral of thy sweet friend without tears ? Why didst thou let that beloved body go without kissing it ? I was in sorrow, and with sobs I drew long sighs from my breast, but I did not weep. The object before me called for such intense grief, that I thought that I did not grieve at all, even when my grief was most violent ; at least so I can tell on looking back. So great was the stupor of my mind that I could not believe that he was dead, even when I saw his body was laid out for burial. But now that stupor has given way to feeling, to grief, and suffering. And are my tears blameable ? Why should I be ashamed of them ? Am I the only one to weep ? Tears, groans, and sobs are all about me. But Thy tears, O Lord Jesus, are the excuse for ours, those tears which Thou didst shed for the death of Thy friend, expressing a human feeling, and proving to us Thy charity. Thou didst put on, O Lord, the feeling of our infirmity, but it was, when Thou wouldest ; therefore Thou mightest have not wept. Oh ! how sweet are Thy tears, how grateful ! how they console me ! How they drop with sweetness on my harassed soul ! Behold, say they, how He loved him. Yea, behold ! how my Simon was loved by all, was embraced by all, was cherished by all."

Truly the white monks were not an hard-hearted race, as appears from this touching picture of a monk's

funeral. The world does not so regret its friends, at least if we may judge from the cold, heartless things that funerals are. But we must now accompany Aelred a little way into this same world to another death-bed. It was one of bitter grief to him, and yet it had its comfort too. We have all this while lost sight of the Saxon priest with whom we began this narrative, Eillan, Aelred's father, the priest of Hexham ; and it is only by accident that a document has been preserved to us, from which it appears that Eillan was taken ill at Durham, and repenting on his death-bed of the unlawful possession which he kept of the property of Hexham, sent for the prior of the canons, and also for Aelred and two other sons, whose names are thus known to have been Samuel and Ethelwold. William, Abbot of Rievaulx, also came, and in their presence, and with the consent of his sons, he formally gave up into the hands of the prior all the lands of the Abbey which he had kept ; and in token of this donation, he gave Robert a silver cross, containing part of the relics of the Saints of Hexham. Probably Aelred's consent, with that of his brothers, was necessary to make this transaction legal, and it must have been with joy that by this renunciation, he cleared his family of the guilt of sacrilege, which had so long hung over them. His father, when his illness grew worse, took the monastic habit in the Abbey of Durham. "He lived a few days longer in strict self-examination, contrition of heart, and mourning for his sins, and after having received the body of the Lord to help him in his passage from life to death, he breathed his last."

This glimpse of Aelred on the brink of his father's grave, is the last which we catch of him as a simple monk of Rievaulx. It took place in 1138, which was

the year of the battle of the Standard. When we meet him again it will be in another capacity.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *The World in the Church.*

AND now we must again quit the cloister and go forth into the world, and this time it will not be the noisy world of knights and barons which was battling outside the walls of Rievaulx, but the ecclesiastical world, in which a more deadly war was waged during that part of Aelred's life which remains. It will thus appear what dangers Aelred escaped by taking refuge in the haven of the cloister from the sea of ecclesiastical politics. It will also be seen how necessary to the church was a reform like the Cistercian, of which one of the first principles was to give up the politics of the world, and by which Abbots were forbidden to become judges, and to frequent courts of law, or even, except in particular cases, to hold communication with the court of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

A struggle was now beginning different in character from any which had gone before. In the former contests, there appear Saints on the one side, and the world on the other. But here we have civilians and

<sup>1</sup> V. Inst. cap. Gen. part i. c. 58, de placitis and 84, Nullus scribat domino Papæ nisi pro propriis causis et coabbatum suorum et episcoporum, archiepiscoporum, regum et principum suorum. No privileges were to be obtained from the Holy See by particular Abbots, c. 31.

canonists, men of business and politicians among churchmen, as well as in the world. Law comes in instead of broad principle, or rather principle takes the shape of law. Nearly at the same time two young monarchs ascended the thrones of England and of Germany, Henry and Frederic. Both were remarkable men. Henry was a good specimen of the Plantagenet race ; never would his restless soul leave his body quiet. All day long he was on his feet, whatever he was doing, whether at mass or at council ; although his legs frequently gave him pain from the many kicks which he received from the fiery chargers which he bestrode.<sup>1</sup> He hardly ever sat down but on horseback, the saddle was his only throne ; from one part to another of his vast dominions he hurried, rolling everywhere his dove-like, deceitful eyes. But if any thing aroused his anger, then it was terrible to look upon him, for his large round eyes seemed to shoot fire on all around him. Not so his imperial majesty ; inexorable and inflexible he was ; so that on the very day of coronation at Aix-la-chapelle, one who had offended him fell at his feet in the very cathedral, thinking that then kings' hearts are disposed to mercy, but he turned away, and would not look at him.<sup>2</sup> When the clergy of Tortona quitted the beleaguered town with cross and banner, and came to him in procession with naked feet to beg for mercy, he was unruffled and undisturbed, and sent them back with a bitter smile, to live on horseflesh or to die of famine.<sup>3</sup> Still he does not seem to have had the terrible fits of passion which burst forth from Henry. He was an indefatigable warrior like

<sup>1</sup> Peter of Blois, Ep. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Otto, de Gestis Frid. ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Otto, ii. 19.

Henry ; but it is not clad in mail and on horseback that we think of him, it is rather seated on his throne on the plains of Roncaglia, dispensing kingdoms with a sword, and provinces with a banner.<sup>1</sup> The sceptre suits best his imperial hand, as the sword, the large, hard ungloved hand of Henry.<sup>2</sup> Pride was the besetting sin of the Hohenstauffen, and passion of the Plantagenet.

Yet however different they were, they agreed in this : both were men of law and zealous administrators of justice, and both endeavoured to swallow up the church in their reforms. Henry's aim was to extend justice through his dominions by means of his new division of circuits and judges. Frederic's was rather to centralize justice and to make himself its head across the Alps, as he had done in Germany. His aim was wider than Henry's ; it extended through all the intricate details of fiefs and arriere-fiefs : the maxims which he studied were those of the imperial court of Constantinople. They involved a theory broad and comprehensive, taking into its extensive range, not only Germany and Italy, but all the world. Wide as was the theory of Innocent III., that of Frederic Barbarossa was its match without its religiousness. Of the two swords given to St. Peter, he claimed one, as the Head of the Church claimed the other, using the same text, without reflecting that he spoiled the illustration, for he at least could not be the successor of the Apostle. Frederic claimed his throne as the successor of Charle-

<sup>1</sup> Est consuetudo curiæ ut regna per gladium, provinciæ per vexillum tradantur. Otto, ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Nunquam, nisi aves deferat, utitur chirothecis. Peter of Blois, Ep. 66.

magne. The old Roman empire was by no means supposed to be dead ; it was considered to be continued in Constantinople, and Charlemagne claimed it on the ground that the Imperial line of Constantinople had failed, and it was time that the empire should return to the West.<sup>1</sup> When afterwards Frederic passed by Constantinople on his way to the East, he would not meet the Greek Emperor, for he was himself the Emperor of Rome ; his Eastern majesty was but the Emperor of New Rome. Head of the Holy Roman empire was his title, and his obsequious prelates were not afraid of the utmost conclusions, which such a title would warrant.<sup>2</sup> Sole Emperor of the world is one of the titles by which the Archbishop of Milan addresses him in a speech delivered on the Roncaglia. Even kings acknowledged his greatness : our own Henry says in a letter to him, "let the will of the Empire be done wherever our dominion extends."<sup>3</sup> It is true that Henry had a point to gain, and words it is well known cost nothing to him, whom a cardinal legate once called the greatest liar he had ever known ; still they must have meant something, not to appear preposterous.

But the great support of Frederic were his legists of Bologna.<sup>4</sup> One day the emperor was riding on a fine horse with two great Doctors of law one on each side of him, Doctor Bulgarus and Doctor Martin, and he asked them whether he was by right lord of the world. Master Bulgarus answered that he was not, as far as the property of it went ; but the cautious Martin said that he was. "Then the lord emperor," says the

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave's Anglo-Saxon Constitution, p. 490. 506.

<sup>2</sup> Radevic. Frising, ii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Radevic. i. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Baronius in ann. 1158.

chronicle, "when he came down from his palfrey, presented it to Martin." Here in the introduction of Doctor Martin and his colleagues we have the characteristic of the whole contest in Germany as well as in England. William Rufus had summary methods of proceeding, rude and simple modes of spoliation ; but Henry was a more refined tyrant ; he set up for a lover of justice and a reformer of law, and so he was, when it suited him. Besides brute force, for that was not wanting too, he fought with appeals, and sentences of suspension and excommunication. But the times were not ready for so much refinement ; it was only the commencement of the new system, and he had to spill the blood of a martyr before he had done. The struggle however between Church and State in England had not reached its height in Aelred's time, and it is not mentioned by him in his writings ; while that between Frederic and the Church is known to have occupied his attention. We will therefore cross over to the continent and see how the chief ecclesiastics of the day, the spiritual rulers of Christendom, were employed, while Aelred was serving God in peace at Rievaulx.

— There was something great about Frederic ; when he crossed the Alps, to extend his power over Italy, he declared that he came not as a conqueror, but as a lawgiver ; his speech to the diet was a noble one,<sup>1</sup> and his attempt to pacify the deadly feuds of the cities was praiseworthy. He gave a written feudal law to Italy which it had not known before ; but he committed the same fault as Henry. The church was to be centralized and drawn within the circle of the empire ; the property of the sees to be treated like that of the baron as imperial fiefs, inalienable without the

<sup>1</sup> Radevic. Frising, ii. 3.

consent of the emperor, the lord of the soil. And in all this it is remarkable how the civilian every where comes into the contest ; instead of the old and dignified watch-words of the contest, investiture by ring and sceptre, or by pastoral staff, there now appears all the jargon of feudal finance, *fodrum*,<sup>1</sup> and regalia, fiefs and allodial lands. The spirit of the struggle was however the same as we shall see as it goes on. Even in the time of Eugenius differences arose between the aged pontiff and the young monarch. Frederic had constituted himself the arbiter between rival candidates for the see of Magdeburg, a dispute which an ecclesiastical tribunal only was competent to decide. Eugenius died before the matter could be settled, and his successor Anastasius was weak enough to concede the point. It was a bad lesson for Frederic ; it destroyed the awe that men had for the inflexibility of the Holy See in a just cause.

Such was the state of affairs when Anastasius died after a short pontificate ; and Hadrian IV. succeeded him in the See of St. Peter. It was a joyful day for England when news came that the cardinal Bishop of Albano was supreme Pontiff, for he was an Englishman, of genuine Saxon blood, Nicholas Breakspear. He was the son of a man in a low rank of life, who became a monk of St. Alban's. The boy was brought up in the cloister, but when he became a candidate for the noviciate, the Abbot would not receive him. It was not every one who could be admitted into the lordly Abbey of St. Alban's. Much however could not be said for the discernment of Abbot Robert, for the next meeting which he had with the poor Saxon boy, was when he came to Rome on the business of his Abbey, and found

<sup>1</sup> *Fodrum* means the duty of supporting the Imperial army.



his rejected novice in the chair of St. Peter. The Abbot brought with him a considerable sum of money, with three mitres, and sandals worked by Christina, prioress of Margate. But Pope Adrian would not receive the money ; he said with a good-humoured smile, "I will not accept thy gifts, for once on a time thou wouldest not have me for thy monk, when I came to beg the habit of thee in all charity." Since he had left St. Alban's, he had become prior of the canons of St. Rufus, and then as cardinal legate of the Holy See, he had been sent into Norway to form the Church among that nearly converted nation. In these ungenial regions, amidst this wild people, he passed many years, and when he came back to Italy he left a church, flourishing with monasteries, and a holy clergy where he had found a wilderness inhabited by a half heathen population. Such was the reputation which he acquired for purity of life and prudence in managing ecclesiastical affairs, that on the death of Anastasius he was raised to preside over the Catholic Church. It was at a dangerous time, when the empire was arousing itself, and the church was on the eve of a contest, at which St. Gregory might have trembled. The times were changed since St. Gregory's death ; the world had grown accustomed to the great doctrines which he had vindicated, and they had now thoroughly worked into the feelings of Christendom. In another respect however matters were less favourable ; St. Gregory had formed his school about him, and his cardinals co-operated with him ; but since then affairs had become matters of precedent and custom at Rome, and the Pope often found himself obliged to act against his judgment, from the preponderance of one party or another in the Sacred College. There was at this time

an Imperial party amongst the Cardinals, and Hadrian found himself hampered by them.<sup>1</sup>

Hadrian did not at first come into direct collision with the Emperor. Frederic had yet to receive the imperial crown at his hands, and was on his good behaviour. When he appeared at Rome with his German army, the Pope and the Emperor had a mutual enemy to fear, the turbulent people of Rome, and much blood was shed on Frederic's coronation day. All however passed off happily as far as Hadrian was concerned ; the sole thing which tended to disturb their peace, was the hesitation of Frederic to hold the stirrup of the Pope, when he mounted his horse. Hadrian in his grave calm way said, "Since thou hast not paid me the honour which thy predecessors have paid me, I will not receive thee to the kiss of peace."<sup>2</sup> Frederic simply took the matter as one of custom and ceremonial. He went in a business-like way to work, looked into old records, and examined as witnesses those who had been present at the crowning of Lothaire, and finding that Hadrian was right, he complied. It was a piece of ceremony, like the kiss of the Pope's feet, very significant certainly, for it implied that the Head of the

<sup>1</sup> *Repugnabant enim Cardinales illi qui addicti erant imperatori et non nisi quod ipsi placere scirent probandum putabant : in reliquis autem se adversarios objiciebant. Quod sæpe factum ab eis in maximum Romanæ ecclesiæ detrimentum.* See the grave words of Baronius in ann. 1155, 23. If it had not been for the opposition of the German party to the terms offered by the king of Sicily, Hadrian would never have been in the awkward position at Beneventum, which forced him to make concessions to Roger.

<sup>2</sup> See *Life of Hadrian* in Muratori. *Rer. Ital. Scrip.*, tom. iii. 443.

Church on earth, was above the Head of the Empire ; still it had nothing to do with individuals, and his Imperial majesty did not think himself degraded. But a serious cause of offence soon followed, which arising, as it did, from an apparent trifle, showed that two opposite principles were at work and might break out any day into open war. Hadrian sent to the emperor two legates, cardinals Roland, chancellor of the Holy See, and Bernard, to demand the liberation of a prelate who had been maltreated and detained prisoner by some German noble on his way from Rome. In the course of his letter the Holy Father had reminded Frederic how he had bestowed upon him the Imperial crown, and professed himself to be ready to grant him greater benefits.<sup>1</sup> Now it happened unfortunately that the Latin word for benefit, also signifies benefice or fief ; and hardly were the words out of the mouth of the official who read the letter to the emperor, when his Imperial majesty took fire, and all the princes of the empire rose up in anger. Was then the only emperor in the world, the head of the feudal hierarchy himself a vassal ? Was the Holy Roman empire itself a fief ? The notion was intolerable ; and when cardinal Roland innocently asked, " Who then did bestow the crown on the emperor ? " one of the fierce nobles around drew a sword, and would have struck him if Frederic had not interposed. The fact was, that the question was an awkward one. If Frederic's lofty theory was true, if he was the imperial Head of the Christian world, where did he get the title ? To one like Frederic, dis-

<sup>1</sup> It seems absurd to suppose that Hadrian meant to claim the empire as a fief. What greater fiefs were there in the world to bestow ?

posed to make it any thing but an empty title, and above all who professed to reduce it to theory by his legists, and to draw inferences from it, the question was one which stared him in the face. Frederic could only ground his title on the fact that Charlemagne, some three hundred years before, had received the Imperial crown from Pope Leo one Christmas day in St. Peter's. The power of granting this crown resided in Rome, such was the theory of the times ; so much so that the mock senate of Rome claimed it, and Frederic had to choose between the sacred Head of Christendom and this self-constituted assembly. This theory was enough to justify the greatest pretensions to rule over temporal princes that the Pope ever made ; and since that power resided in one who was Christ's Vicar on earth, we need not wonder that the nations bowed before it. We may look upon it now calmly and dispassionately, for the power has passed away and is not even asserted ; and without taking fire like Frederic and his princes, we may say that in as far as it could be carried out, it was true. The fact that it could be exercised was its justification, and it might be well if the nations had Christ's earthly representative to be to them a living impersonation of justice, and to step in when earthly and material power is of no avail.

The idea was therefore by no means so preposterous as might be imagined ; besides some kingdoms were acknowledged fiefs of the Holy See. However this may be, Hadrian did not in this case lay claim to this power ; he mildly answered Frederic that he was surprised that he should misinterpret his words, and that 'beneficium' meant benefit, as well as benefice ; so the storm cleared away for the present from the imperial brows. But nothing external would keep the peace

between two such elements as the Church and the world. The empire of the Church can hardly be defined ; in one sense it has no earthly rule at all, and in another it bears rule wherever there are men who have souls to be saved. Wide therefore is its dominion as is the empire of conscience, and thus in one sense the whole world comes under its jurisdiction. But this kingdom, strong as it is, depends entirely on a conscientious basis ; when therefore the conscience is vitiated or misinformed, it at once put itself in opposition to the Church. In this way then there can never long be peace between two such powers, unless one is recognized to be above the other. All this is true in the abstract ; but the battle between the Church and the world is hardly ever fought directly on these grounds ; but on a much grosser and more material battle field. And this was especially the case in the struggle between the Hohenstauffen and the Popes. In process of time the Church acquires rights and property, and these in a certain sense circumscribe, because they serve to define her power. Besides which they make her open to attack, by giving her points to defend, for which she cannot fight without the appearance of ambition. She must needs mingle in worldly policy, and appear externally like one of the powers of the world. Church property looks just like any other property, and if a Bishop possesses land, why should he not do homage for it ? If it is recognized and defended by the law, it becomes subject to the law. So reasoned Frederic. And while he was about it, he thought he might as well make laws about ecclesiastical property as any other. The Bishops in Italy were possessed of great power in the cities ; they were often temporal princes, and he could

not be sure of the fair cities of Lombardy without keeping them under. He therefore required the act of homage and oath of fealty from a Bishop as he would from one of his own nobles. When Hadrian remonstrated with him, he answered with a curious mixture of history and imperial theology, while the legist of Bologna evidently inspires the whole. Hadrian's letter begins with saying that the divine law bids us honour our parents. Frederic answered by quoting, "The law of justice, which gives every man his own. From his ancestors did he get his crown, but what had Silvester in the time of Constantine? Whatever that popedom of theirs possesses, it obtains from the liberality of princes." And then came the text about "rendering unto Cæsar all that is Cæsar's," and an exhortation to humility. At another time when Hadrian complained about the occupation of Episcopal palaces by himself and his retainers, he answered with a quotation from the digests that the soil was his, and therefore so was all that was built upon it.<sup>1</sup>

All this will at least serve to mark the character of the contest; it was the world's law in its process of formation, striving to draw into itself, and to neutralize the Church. If it had succeeded in merging the jurisdiction of the Church into its own, St. Gregory's work would have been undone. It was not however till after Hadrian's death that the Emperor's designs became apparent, for then broke out one of the most audacious acts of schism that ever attempted to divide the Christian world. In the conclave held for the election of the Pope, a large majority of the Cardinals united in favour of Roland, that same Chancellor

<sup>1</sup> Giesler, i. 52.

of the Holy See, who excited Frederic's anger by his untimely question. He had already been robed in the purple mantle in which the new Pontiff was presented to the people of Rome, when Cardinal Octavian, supported by two other Cardinals, pulled the mantle off him. A senator who was present snatched it out of Octavian's hand, who then proceeded to robe himself with another mantle, which he had brought with him for the purpose. Unluckily, however, he put on the hind part of the mantle foremost, so that the hood hung down in front ; then the doors were thrown open, and thus accoutred, he presented himself to the people, amidst a band of armed men, while the Cardinals, with the real successor of St. Peter, fled into the church to hide themselves. The instinct of Christendom saw through the transaction, and recognized Alexander, for so Roland was now called ; even Henry II.'s good sense led him right all through the struggle, and though he threatened great things in the height of his contest with St. Thomas, he remained faithful to Alexander. And now the designs of Frederic became apparent ;<sup>1</sup> he wished to have a German instead of a Catholic Pope. A Pope there must be, and let him be infallible too ; nay, the more infallible the better, provided he is but the servant of the empire. Sovereigns were ready enough to acknowledge the Papal supremacy to the utmost, when it suited their purpose, when they had a new kingdom to conquer, or a weak title to strengthen. It was only when he came in their way that they wished to be rid of him. So now Frederic called together a council at Pavia ; it consisted but of the

<sup>1</sup> De amissione imperialis curiæ timebat. Acta Alex. III. Muratori 3. 452.

bishops of the empire, and so he could safely talk of his rights as successor of Constantine, and quote the emperors who had exercised the right of convoking councils. The upshot was, as might have been expected, that Victor, for so Octavian had called himself, was judged to be Pope. But this council was a failure ; Alexander was too wise to submit his cause to any council whatever ; he was Pope and could not be judged ; besides which the Christian world had already decided by sending in its adherence to Alexander. Frederic saw that he was foiled, and next tried to entice the good Louis of France to a conference, to decide on the claims of the two claimants. Louis had been so far taken in as to promise to meet the Emperor ; but Frederic unhappily asserted in the course of the negotiation, that only the Bishops of the empire had the right of judging a cause respecting the election of a supreme Pontiff, his imperial majesty being the especial defender of the Holy See. But Louis smiled at this novel doctrine, and said, " Does not the Emperor know that our Lord when on earth bade Peter feed His sheep ? And are not the French Bishops a part of the flock which the Son of God has committed to Peter ?" And so saying, Louis " turned his horse's head disdainfully, and flew to arms with his barons and the rest of his forces ;" and back went the Emperor, with all his men, and would not wait to confront the *Fleurs-de-Lis*. The times were not yet come when the world could take in the idea of a French Pope and a German Pope.

It is not our purpose to follow the struggle to its close, to show how the Lombard league was formed, how the Tuscan league, the army of the Church, joined it, and how after many a hard battle by land and by



sea, Frederic at last, in St. Mark's cathedral at Venice, threw himself prostrate at Alexander's feet, and the Pontiff raised him with tears in his eyes, and the *Te Deum* was entoned for joy. But the contest lasted for many a long year, during which Alexander had conflicting interests to settle, and a line of policy to pursue ; at the commencement of the whole contest he had to embark for France with all his train ; and little was the peace that he could enjoy with two contests on his hands, one with Henry of England, the other with the Emperor.

Little indeed was the supreme Pontiff to be envied in his high dignity ; and for this conclusion, like John of Salisbury, we have high authority. There remains on record a conversation which took place between two frank hearted Englishmen, one on the throne of St. Peter, the other brought close to it by his position. Considering that one of the interlocutors was Hadrian, the only Pope who was English born, the dialogue is unique, and forms a fitting moral to this chapter. "I call to witness," says John, "Lord Hadrian, that no man is more wretched than the Roman Pontiff, no condition more miserable than his. If he had nothing else to vex him, the labour alone would make him sink." He had gone through every office in the Church, from the very lowest, and every step brought an accession of bitterness ; and yet all former bitterness was joy compared to what he felt on the thorny chair of St. Peter. Well might the crown and the mitre shine with brilliancy, for they were of fire, and burnt the brow of the wearer. And in another place, John tells us how Pope Hadrian begged of him to tell him what men thought of the Roman curia, and how he bluntly laid bare what was one cause of Hadrian's difficulties, the universal

outcry against the exactions and avarice of the court of Rome. Doubtless Hadrian was in part right when, with a smile, he answered his rough monitor by quoting the old fable of the body and its revolted members. The administration of the ecclesiastical offices of Christendom could not be carried on without extensive resources. The whole array of expectatives, mandates, and oblations, might be excused on the ground that it was necessary that the Pope should have a certain number of benefices to give away, just as a prime minister cannot carry on the government without the exercise of patronage. All this is true, and the governed are ever apt to overrate the faults of their rulers ; but it is also true that the voice of St. Bernard had hardly disappeared from the earth, and he had cried out " O ambition, the cross of the ambitious, how is it that thou art a torment to all, yet all love Thee ! Ambition rather than devotion wears the pavement of St. Peter's ! Does not the papal palace echo to its voice every day ? Is not the whole laborious discipline of law and canon administered for its gain ? Does not Italian avarice gloat over its spoils with insatiable avidity ?"<sup>1</sup> This of course proves nothing as to the rights of the Holy See, nor did it interfere in St. Bernard's mind with the ideal of the father of Christendom, " the hammer to beat down tyrants, the father of kings, the moderator of laws, the dispenser of canons."<sup>2</sup> Nor does it prove anything against individuals ; the character of Hadrian himself has never been impeached, and even John of Salisbury, with his hand on his heart, declares, " Never have I seen more honest clerks than in the Romish church." But it does prove that all the inconveniences of an ex-

<sup>1</sup> De Con. iii. 1.<sup>2</sup> De Con. 4 fin.

tensive system belonged to the Roman See. The Pope must be a man of business ; he must be vexed with the complaints of his subjects, and the evil of his ministers ; and the Cardinals and great men of the church must be men of action and politicians. And now that we have drawn the moral that we wanted from this narrative, we will go back to where we left Aelred in 1138, and see what he was doing while all this was going on in the great world.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Cistercian Abbot.*

SILENTLY and rapidly did the Cistercian order spread in England ; first came Waverley, and so retired and solitary was its situation, that its existence was unknown to their brethren in the north, and they were astonished to discover that there were white monks in England besides themselves.<sup>1</sup> Rievaulx, Tintern, and Fountains came next, and from them issued communities which spread over the face of the land ; and this silent rise of the houses of St. Mary in England, is the only redeeming feature of Stephen's miserable reign. "At that time," says William of Newbridge, "when the whole strength of the regal power was gone, the power-

<sup>1</sup> Battle of the Standard, ap. Twysden. Waverley was founded in 1128, according to its annals. It never rose to the importance of Rievaulx ; in 1187 it had but a hundred and twenty lay-brethren and seventy monks, while Rievaulx, within ten years after its foundation, had three hundred brethren, though the proportion of the lay-brethren to the monks does not appear.

ful men of the realm, each, according to his means, continued to build castles, either to defend their own or to overrun their neighbours' estates. At this time then when evil was rife through the weakness of king Stephen, or rather through the devil's malice, the great King of Heaven by His wisdom and Providence, gloriously stepped forth in a marked way to put down the king of pride, by erecting such castles as befit the King of peace. For, many more monasteries of servants and hand-maids of the Lord are acknowledged to have risen up during the short time of Stephen's reign, or nominal reign, than during the hundred years before."<sup>1</sup> It seemed to be the only sign of religion left among the nobles, and it was a source of great comfort to men of restless habits continually exposed to great dangers, when they thought that their monks were praying for them while they were engaged in their perilous wanderings.<sup>2</sup> William, of Albemarle, declared that he always slept soundly about cock crow, whether under his tent or on the wide sea, because he knew that then the bells of his Abbey of Melsa were ringing for matins ;<sup>3</sup> and at another time, John Courtenay, when in great peril of shipwreck, bade the sailors be of good cheer, for his Cistercians of Ford were at that moment praying for him. The poor people too loved "the hooded folk, who spent a part of their time in prayer and the service of God, and the rest in the labours of the field like rustics."

In the year 1143, William, Earl of Lincoln, came to the Abbot of Rievaulx, to beg of him to send a colony of monks to Revesby, one of his estates in Lincolnshire.

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, 1, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, 5, 393.      <sup>3</sup> Dugdale, 379.

The Abbot complied, and sent Aelred, with twelve monks, to take possession of the new ground assigned to them ; and so he left the valley of Rievaulx, about five years after the time when we left him at Durham, standing by his father's death-bed.<sup>1</sup> It was a place of no great dignity this Abbacy of Revesby, but it was one which required consummate prudence. Each new community was an experiment, and when the founder had given a certain quantity of wood and meadow, the monks had to shift for themselves, and to clear their way by felling trees and building habitations, as a settler would do in the woods of America. There was plenty of marsh in this domain, for special permission is given to the monks to build where they please in the marsh ; and from these words of the charter, it is not very hard to guess that Aelred's occupations at this time were principally cutting down wood and draining a Lincolnshire fen.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the picture which we thus get of him, axe in hand, working in his tunic and black scapular is not very dignified ; and he must often have regretted Rievaulx and his novices ; but monks do not choose for themselves, and all was gain to him for Christ's sake. One good however he got from his Abbacy of Revesby ; he had there advanced into the country of the Gilbertines, for fens seem to be the territory of the order of Sempringham, as mountains of Benedictines, and valleys of Cistercians. And here probably he became acquainted with St. Gilbert, for

<sup>1</sup> Dugdale says that the annals of Lowth give 1143 for the foundation of this Abbey ; and the annals of Peterborough though they assign it to 1142, yet say that it was in the pontificate of Celestine II., which was in 1143.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, v. 454.

"Gislebertus de Semplingham" is mentioned as one of the witnesses to a charter belonging to the Abbey. He was not however more than two years at Revesby, when he was called away to a much higher sphere.<sup>1</sup> In 1145, William, the first Abbot of Rievaulx, died, and brother Maurice was elected in his stead. It was not long, however, before the new Abbot judged himself unfit for his dignity, and resigned his charge. Richard of Hexham says, that he did so for the glory of God. He doubtless found that he made a better monk than Abbot, and retired. It was a harder thing to be an Abbot in those days than may be imagined. On his resignation, the monks bethought themselves of their former master of the novices, the Abbot of Revesby, and so they elected him Abbot of Rievaulx.

Now since there were various sorts of Abbots in the middle ages, we must classify them before we can know where, or under what species, to place Aelred. There is of course the grand division of good and bad, but this is far too wide for our purpose. There was the hunting and hawking Abbot, a character rife in Saxon times, but as yet rare in England since the Conquest. And then there was the political Abbot, he whose shaven crown and thoughtful face might be seen at parliaments and hustings,<sup>2</sup> a man in high favour with kings and nobles. He often had a private exchequer, appropriated the convent money, and sent presents out of

<sup>1</sup> The chronicle of Melrose puts Abbot William's death in 1145. Simeon, of Durham, appears to give 1146 as the date; his words may, however, mean that William died in 1145, and that Aelred succeeded in the course of the next year, the short interval being occupied by Maurice.

<sup>2</sup> John of Salisbury.

it to the king and queen.<sup>1</sup> “Now a days,” says Aelred, “what market, what court of justice, what council can go on without monks?” These Abbots however were not always bad, and of the good sort was Suger, the great Abbot of St. Denis. Besides this, there was the negligent Abbot, the good easy man, who sat in his abbatial lodgings, entertaining seculars instead of associating with his own monks, and asking them to dinner at his table as he ought to have done; he cared not though the master cellarer and officials of the convent pawned the convent money to Jews;<sup>2</sup> and he let monastic discipline go to ruin by allowing the monks in the infirmary to talk as they would, so that the brethren pretended to be sick when they were not, and by giving dispensations to the brethren, and allowing them too many pittances on feast-days. And there was the tyrannical Abbot,<sup>3</sup> who despatched the brethren who were obnoxious to him to distant cells, and kept them there all their lives, who, instead of consulting “the nobility of the convent,”<sup>4</sup> its men of rank, the prior, the cellarer, and the sacrist, chose to surround himself with young men and novices, and act without advice. And then he would appropriate the property of the convent, and give the lands to enrich his family.<sup>5</sup> But on the whole Abbots who were imperfect without being absolutely bad may be divided into two classes. First, there was the Abbot who gave so much time to contemplation and prayer as to neglect his duties, and to make blunders from not knowing the resources of the Abbey; as did John, Abbot of St. Alban’s, who pulled down a large

<sup>1</sup> Matt. Par. Vitæ. Abb. St. Albani, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. Par. 114. Cronica Jocelini, p. 2      <sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Matt Parr, 102.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. Par. 102, 113.

portion of the church, and found that he had no money to build it up again.<sup>1</sup> It was indeed very necessary that the Abbot should look after the property of the convent, for instances occurred in which a convent was entirely deserted by its monks, simply because their property was not enough for their maintenance, as happened to the Abbey of Pipewell, in Northamptonshire. It once stood in the midst of beautiful woods, which formed a principal source of its revenue.<sup>2</sup> But by the negligence of some Abbots, and the misconduct of others, the woods were fast thinned and destroyed ; whole trees were burnt in the huge chimneys in winter time, powerful persons who wanted timber for building helped themselves from the trees, and bad Abbots cut down the stately oaks to pay their debts, till the poor Abbey was left shorn of her leafy honours, "like a bird stripped of its feathers." Besides, if the Abbot did not keep a sharp look out on his grounds, his neighbours were sure to encroach upon him. So it did not do for the Abbot to be absorbed in contemplation, and to neglect his business. Secondly, besides this class, there is another much more extensive, and this consists of the Abbots, who were so attentive to the secular affairs of the convent as, externally at least, to appear like worldly men. These were the sharp, shrewd, keen-eyed men, who esteemed the honour and comfort of the convent as their own, ready to fight with king or bishop for the privileges of the house. Such an one would journey to Rome to procure exemption from episcopal authority, with his pockets well lined with marks of gold and silver for the cardinals.<sup>3</sup> An Abbot must be

<sup>1</sup> Matt. Par. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, vol. 5, 4, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. 71.



eloquent and ready, so as to preach dignified sermons to the people in the church ; he must not be too learned or too spiritual, and the men that he loves are not the good, humble monks, but men like himself, who make good officials for the convent. Yet he must be irreproachable in his morals, that none speak evil of the convent. A stately figure he must be, to set off the jewelled mitre, and the curiously wrought dalmatic, and the pastoral staff. In fine, he must be such an one as to please the monks of St. Edmund, whose prayer was, when they wanted a new Abbot, "From good clerks deliver us, good Lord."<sup>1</sup> He would form the very beau ideal of him whose general rule, on an election, was "that we choose not a very good monk, nor yet an over-wise clerk, neither one too simple nor too weak, for I know that some one has said, '*Medio tutissimus ibis.*'"

Aelred belonged to neither of these classes ; he was rather the Father Abbot, than the Lord Abbot. The Cistercian idea of a superior was, that he should be the spiritual director of the whole convent. What Aelred had been to the novices, he now was to the three hundred brethren of Rievaulx, with the additional accession of a dignity marked rather by its influence, than by the external signs of magnificence common in other orders. His office was a laborious one, and he who was made Abbot was considered, in comparison with the simple monk, to be taking the part of Martha rather than that of Mary. Many a time when he would rather have been on his knees in the Church, had Aelred to listen to the detail of the spiritual wants of the brethren. Little do they know of monastic life who suppose that all temptation was over as soon as

<sup>1</sup> Cronica Jocelini, p. 11.

the gates of the monastery had closed upon the monk, and shut him out from the world. "Ah ! brethren," said Aelred, in one of his sermons to the convent, one Christmas season, "of those who are just come from the world, some are unlearned and simple-minded, others erudite and subtle, some bound by the habits of vice, others, though sinners, yet free from all crime, some brought up in luxury, others worn down by a hardy life, some slothful, others active, some of such a temper as to feel scarce any temptations to impurity, others tempted by the least thing, some of a fiery temper, others naturally mild. It is necessary then to study the state and the temper of every one who flies hither from the world, to know what is hurtful to each, and to point out to him the best refuge from his enemy. Some are to be kept away from all external employment, others from the society of this or that man, others are to find a covert under a strict silence from the burning heat of anger, others must be taught to cure their lusts by coarse food, others are to be preserved from a restless spirit and a wandering heart by labour and watchings, others are to be sheltered from the attacks of evil spirits, by psalms and prayers, by meditation and reading. In every case an Abbot must offer to each vice, by which those under him are attacked, the proper treatment which experience tells us, is opposed to it."<sup>1</sup> This was Aelred's occupation.

They were great schools of spiritual life these first Cistercian convents, wonderful realizations of the Book of the Imitation of Christ. Aelred knew all the stages of the religious life of the soul, and could classify and arrange them as a physician would states

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 28.

of the body. "The first step," he says, "is, that a man flying from the world and eschewing all vice, should shun all worldliness.<sup>1</sup> Then in all obedience let him submit himself to his superior, and let him purify himself, and in hunger and thirst, in watchings and labours, in poverty and nakedness, take vengeance on himself for all that his memory taxes him with, and so must good habits be set up in the place of bad. Thus in the nest of discipline must he remain, till he be full fledged, and have the wings of virtue wherewith to fly, for never can he rule, who has not first learned to obey. And then purified from vice and adorned with virtue, let him pass on to the study of the scriptures, and there he will receive illumination and gain wisdom. And when he shall have learned in the scriptures to refer all his life and knowledge to the love of God and of his neighbour, then on the two wings of wisdom and of love, borne up to the mount of contemplation, let him learn to form this earthly tabernacle after the pattern of the heavenly. The first step then is conversion, the second purification, the third virtue, the fourth knowledge, the fifth contemplation, the sixth charity. And these perchance are the six steps to the throne of Solomon ; if any one strives to sit thereon, without having trodden them, he will mount, not to take his seat there, but to fall headlong." In another place, by a more accurate division, he mentions three stages,—Conversion, Purification, and Contemplation ; and in this last stage, "the soul purified by spiritual exercises, passes on to heavenly contemplation and meditation on the Holy Scriptures. Then does virtue begin to grow sweet to it, vice to be loathsome, and it tastes how sweet the

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 28.

Lord is.<sup>1</sup> In the first of these stages, fear, proceeding from the thought of God's justice, purifies the soul; and when it is purified, wisdom illuminates it; and after this illumination the goodness of God rewards it by the infusion of His sweetness."<sup>2</sup>

Strange is this early germ of the threefold division of the progress of the Christian soul into the Purificative, the Illuminative and the Unitive life, which was drawn much more fully many hundred years after by another Saint. Aelred here shows us the spiritual exercises of the twelfth century. And it was this system of which he was the administrator at Rievaulx. Like a good shepherd, with his pastoral staff in his hand, he ruled his flock, bearing the weak ones in his bosom, and helping all with his gentle voice to escape the jaws of the lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. How much he loved them appears in every word of his writings. Many slight vestiges there are of his conventual history, scattered up and down in his works, scanty glimpses of struggles and pains which he participated with his spiritual children. How they rejoiced when they could chat with him alone, away from the Philistines who took up his time, as they called the strangers who came to him on secular matters! How familiarly they talked to him, not fearing to use words of playful raillery with each other in his presence, for it was his maxim that the soul required relaxation at times. They ventured to speak to him of his friends, how one had taken offence at him for some trivial cause, how in times when he was falsely accused, one friend who lived beyond the seas, had remained faithful to him, while even another

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 31.

<sup>2</sup> De Jesu puero. 493.

friend, the Sacristan of Clairvaux, had taken part against him.<sup>1</sup> Each of these slight hints contains a whole history of feelings and affections which has now perished ; but one thing we can see, that he was still the same Aelred, always looking out for some one to love, and one young monk was especially beloved by him, called Ivo, and for him probably he wrote that most beautiful treatise of his on Jesus,<sup>2</sup> when a child of twelve years old in the temple. But the Lord would not let him love Ivo too well, for this young monk died before he had been long at Rievaulx. But even more than for the bodily death of his disciples did he mourn for their spiritual death ; one especially, there was a promising brother, who fell we know not how ; nor should we know any thing about him, if Aelred did not hold up the fall of this nameless brother as a warning to the convent in one of his sermons. And his love descended to more minute particulars, for he condole with his brethren for the loss which they one year sustained by the destruction of a flock of sheep,—a serious loss for the farmer monks, who lived by the sale of the wool.

It must not however be supposed that Aelred's life was altogether as quiet as it might at first sight appear. He was sometimes obliged to be my lord Abbot as well as his neighbours. The late Abbot of Rievaulx had been obliged to make a journey across the Alps, and to appear at Rome in favour of St. William's deposition. Aelred's journeys did not, however, lead him so far from home. On the death of Henry Murdach, St. William was installed at York, without any opposition from the new Abbot. Aelred had however many voyages across

<sup>1</sup> De Spirit-amri. iii. 453, 460. et passim.

<sup>2</sup> De Jesu puero duodenni.

the sea to the general Chapter of Cîteaux. But even without going to Burgundy, he had matter enough to employ him at home. The Abbot of Rievaulx was head of the Cistercian Abbots in England, and sometimes causes came before him judicially. In 1151, he decided a cause in favour of the monks of Byland, who after many troubles had at length obtained a settlement. The poor brethren had been expelled from their convent by the Scots, and had been refused shelter by the Abbey of Furness, their mother house, and had managed to find a home on the other side of the Rye, so near Rievaulx that the bells of each convent might be heard from the other. This was, however, contrary to Cistercian discipline, and they again removed to Byland. There they were in a flourishing state, and had not only built themselves a church, but also a parochial chapel in an out lying valley, for the use of which they had generously sent one of the bells of the convent in a waggon.<sup>1</sup> When lo ! the Abbot of Furness, after treating them so inhospitably, claimed jurisdiction over them, and the cause came before Aelred, who decided it in favour of his poor neighbours of Byland. But not only by his own order, but by all the monasteries around him, he was consulted in cases of difficulty. In some of the later years of his life, it cannot precisely be ascertained which, he was called to Watton, to pronounce on the well-known case of an inmate of the convent, who had fallen into sin.<sup>2</sup> The only question which was asked him was, What was to be done with the wretched penitent, under the extraordinary circumstances ? Aelred, as appears by his writings,<sup>3</sup> was no

<sup>1</sup> Dugdale, 5, 351.

<sup>2</sup> V. Life of St. Gilbert, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 24. And also Serm. 4, p. 37.

friend to monks who were ever on the look-out for miracles, but in this case there was no choice between accusing the nuns of a wicked fraud, or believing the truth of miracle. Aelred found that he had reason to believe that the nuns were holy women, and thought the latter alternative by far the less difficult. He had pity on the wretched sinner, and when the prior wrote to him to ask whether she should be punished any more, he answered, "What God has cleansed call not thou common, and what He has Himself absolved do not thou bind."

In the Lent of 1153, he went on a journey which was ever memorable to him. The business of his order took him into Scotland, and he saw king David for the last time in his life. David had founded no less than four Cistercian Abbeys in Scotland, it is therefore not at all unlikely that Aelred should have often seen him since he became Abbot ; and it must have been with a fearful joy that he revisited those scenes from which so many years before he had fled as if for his life. Many a change had taken place, both in king David and in himself, since he had left Scotland. And on this, his last visit, he missed a face which had ever welcomed him with beaming eyes. Henry, the heir of the crown of Scotland, the brave soldier, and accomplished prince, had died the year before, to the irreparable loss of Scotland. With his devoted piety and enlightened understanding, he would have been a fitting match for the Henry who was just about to mount the English throne. Aelred had left David in the beginning of his reign, full of schemes for the improvement of a realm, which was flourishing under his care ; now he found him a penitent and a mourner, bound down by grief, yet resigned to God's will. He acknowledged that the death of his

son was a fitting punishment, sent by God for having let loose the savage Galwegians on the north of England. So poignant had been his grief, that had it not been for the entreaties of his whole realm, bishops and nobles, he would have given up his crown and sceptre, and retired to a convent. When Aelred left him, he seemed to have a presentiment that they should never meet again on this side the grave, and he embraced him fondly and shed tears when they parted. A few months after, at the end of May, shortly before the Ascension, news were brought to Rievaulx that David had died as he had lived, a holy death. Aelred mourned for his friend and benefactor with the poignant grief which was natural to him. In the first burst of his sorrow he wrote a sketch of the good king's character, and afterwards sent it to one for whom he then felt a great anxiety and love, to Henry, who had mounted the throne of England, David's grand nephew.

It is interesting to see the light in which the Abbot views the young king ; and truly Henry might well be an object of solicitude to every thoughtful man. He was the most powerful prince in Europe, in the flower of his age, and gifted with talents and the will to extend his power. Henry began well ; near the place of his landing was a church, into which he entered to pray, and at mass he came forward to receive the kiss of peace from the priest. His policy soon showed that he meant to restrain the power of the nobles, to show justice to all, and especially to favour the peasants and the burghers of the towns. In the very month of his coronation, the election of Adrian to the papal throne seemed to promise a happy concord between the English Church and state. Aelred then might well look with fondness and hope on the young king. Henry's



vices had not yet developed, and Aelred, with the sanguine and trusting temper which made him unable to conceive the possibility of fraud in the convent of Watton, invested the young king with all manner of virtues. He looked upon him as the destined restorer of the old English line to the throne of England, the line of Edward the Confessor, which the Abbot had never ceased to love. He applies to Henry an old prophecy, ascribed to St. Dunstan, and rejoices "that England has now a king of English blood, and bishops and abbots, princes, and good soldiers." He fondly draws out "from ancient chronology," the genealogy of Henry, through his English mother and English kings, "even up to Adam, the father of all mortals ;" and he holds up, as a model to him, his great ancestor Alfred, and David, whose death he was mourning, "whose pure hands had made him a belted knight." At the same time, with a keen anticipation of Henry's dangers, he drops various hints about submission to the Church ; "how the blessed Alfred thought that the great dignity of kings consisted in having no power in the Church of Christ, and how he imitated the example of Constantine, who said to the bishops, 'It belongs not to me to judge of priests.'" Henry's latter days, troubled as they were with the rebellion of his sons, and stained with the blood of a martyr, would not have been so different from his religious landing, when, high in hopes, he threw himself on his knees in the little church by the seashore, if he had attended to Aelred's warning.

A part of the Abbot's exhortation to Henry was, that he should watch over the interests of the royal family of Scotland ; and this portion of the homily he neglected, as well as the rest. Henry, when he was made a knight by David, had sworn to leave the Scottish king and his

heirs in peaceful possession of the domains which they held of the English crown. He, however, outwitted David's successor, the young king Malcolm, who was no match for his unscrupulous suzerain. The young prince was the son of Henry, the friend of Aelred's youth. From the simplicity and purity of his character he was called the maiden king ; and of him St. Godric said, that Malcolm and St. Thomas were more acceptable to God than any men between the north and the Alps.<sup>1</sup> For both these reasons Aelred loved him, and was enabled to do him a service which Henry's armies could never have effected. When Malcolm returned from France, whither, with a boyish ardour for war, he had accompanied his cousin Henry, he found his nobles every where in revolt, war in the wild clans of the Highlands, and war in Galloway. His people did not like his intimacy with the English monarch, and Malcolm was almost looked upon as a foreigner. He, however, quelled the rising of the Highlands, and expelled the savage inhabitants of Moray, and substituted for them some of his more peaceable Lowland subjects ; he reduced his revolted nobles, and Galloway alone remained. In three pitched battles he beat these tur-

<sup>1</sup> From the connexion which undoubtedly existed between Whiterne, the See of Galloway and St. Aelred, it seems exceedingly likely that he persuaded Fergus to retire, though the writer of the life in Capgrave mixes up two events together. It is certain from Fordun, 8. 4., that Fergus did take the habit of a canon at Holyrood, but the dissensions which took place in his family to which he refers, did not happen till after Aelred's death, in the reign of William. Fordun, 8, 25, 39. The revolt of Fergus occurred soon after Henry's expedition to Toulouse, probably in the year 1160, which is the date given in the Chronicle of Holyrood. Ang. Sac. i. 161.

bulent Galwegian clans in one year, and the country was reduced to a precarious state of peace. But the cause of the evil still remained, and unless he could have expelled the people, as he had done those of Moray, it seemed likely to remain. The people were the remnants of the ancient Picts, and resisted all the efforts of the Scottish king to civilize them. Vice seemed so thoroughly engrained into their character that even Christianity had not expelled it. An Abbot of Rievaulx, however, might venture amidst the savage tribes of Galloway ; Aelred's name was well known all over the border, and even the vicious chieftains of the country felt awed by his simple dignity. It is not known what special cause took Aelred into Galloway. The old bishopric of Whiterne had just been re-established, and the regular canons, who had been introduced, had a great love and reverence for him. He had certainly visited them, and had written the Life of St. Ninian, the founder of the See. It seems that he even knew the dialect of this wild region, for the original life of the Saint was in their language. At all events, all Scotland had heard of the holy Abbot of Rievaulx, who had once been high steward to king David ; and Fergus, the chieftain of Galloway, knew very well who he was when he saw the white habit approach this mountain fastness. Aelred negotiated a permanent peace with the dangerous chief. This was a strange diplomacy, but a most successful one. Fergus surrendered himself into the hands of Malcolm, but instead of being put to death for his revolt, he was allowed to take the habit of a canon in the monastery of the Holyrood, at Edinburgh.

This is almost the last of the scanty notices of Aelred's life which have been left on record. In the

same year in which he rendered this signal service to Scotland, occurred the council of Pavia, and in his sermons to the brethren in the Advent of that year, he mourns bitterly over the miserable schism which was dividing the Church, and declares his unshaken adherence to Alexander. The whole Cistercian order was interested in the contest, for their brethren in Germany were suffering persecution at the hands of Frederic for their fidelity to the rightful successor of St. Peter. There is a deep and almost prophetic melancholy about the words of Aelred to his monks, when he applies the words of the prophet Isaiah to his own times, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." "Ah ! brethren," he says, "the Lord hath created two great lights in the firmament of the holy Church, the priesthood and the kingdom. The greater light is the priesthood to rule the day, that is, spiritual things ; the lesser light is the kingdom, to rule the night of worldly things. It is an unnatural thing if the sun rule the night, if the priest should draw over the clear light of his conscience, the night of worldly matters ; or if the moon should rule the day, the king should meddle with the administration of the sacraments." And thus in words rather of sorrow than of anger, he bids the bishops of the time remember St. Dunstan and St. Cuthbert. The contest between Henry and the Church had not yet begun ; St. Thomas was not yet Archbishop ; but in Aelred's mournful words, in which he asks the courtier prelates of the time, how they could be martyrs who were ambitious and ashamed of poverty, it might seem as if he foresaw how in time of persecution they would fall away, as indeed they did. And again, in the same sorrowful

manner he speaks of the kingly power, "Then shall the moon be turned into blood when the hands of the prince are full of blood, when they take away the right of the just man, and follow not equity, but their own lusts and anger." Both Henry and the prelate, to whom these sermons are dedicated, Gilbert Foliot, the memorable Bishop of London, might have taken warning by these words.

Aelred, too, in the same discourses, takes a long farewell of his brethren, as he was setting out to the general chapter of the year at Citeaux. He seems to feel that his life was precarious, and he bids his children pray for him, for it is my wish, he says, to lay down among you the tabernacle of my flesh, and pour out my spirit in your hands, that you may close the eyes of your father, and my bones may be laid in the grave under your eyes." He wished that his tomb, with his crosier sculptured on it, should catch the eyes of his brethren, that they might say a prayer for Abbot Aelred, as they passed it in chapter. Aelred might well fear when he was going on so long a journey, lest he should never see Rievaux again ; for many years before his death, one account says ten, he was afflicted with a terrible chronic disease, apparently the stone. He did, however, return from Citeaux, and lived for six years after this journey ; but they were years of pain and of living death. Very little is known of this period of his life except that he suffered, and that he died. He does not appear to have given up his functions, at least in the commencement of his disease, for the journeys both to Galloway and to Burgundy come within the period of his sufferings ; and to the last he seems to have been able to celebrate mass, but at times his pains were most

acute. One account represents him as sitting on a mat before the fire, with his head between his knees, bowed down with pain ; and during the year before his death, after celebrating mass, he used to remain for a whole hour on his bed, unable to speak or move. Still his spirit rose above his wasted and emaciated body ; he spent his time in constant prayer and meditation on the Holy Scriptures. He had said before, in sermons preached in the beginning of his disorder, " Brethren, I tell you, no misfortune can I suffer, nothing sad or bitter arise, which by the opening of the Holy Scriptures cannot be made to vanish, or be borne with greater ease. How often, sweet Jesus, does my day turn into evening ; how often does intolerable pain, like the darkness of night, succeed to the feeble light of consolation. All things become tasteless ; all that I see is a burthen to me. But I go to meditate in Thy fields, I turn over the sacred page, then does Thy grace, sweet Jesus, drive away the darkness with its light, do away with weariness, and then do tears succeed to groans, and heavenly joy follows tears." St. Augustine's Confessions was also always in his hands ; tears were ever flowing from his eyes, and his thoughts were ever fixed on his Lord, for whom he had given up all things earthly. It was no wonder, that while he thus only held to earth by a body which was a perpetual crucifixion to him, the brethren, as they passed the cell of their father, heard his voice speaking, and other voices answering, which by their sweetness they took to be those of angels. At length, about the feast of the blessed St. Laurence, whose martyrdom he had so long imitated by his patient endurance of excruciating pain, his loving and gentle spirit was released from its sufferings, to the presence

of Him whom he had seen on earth, reflected, however darkly, in the glass of love.<sup>1</sup>

When the news of Aelred's death came to the Abbey of Swineshead, in Lincolnshire, Gilbert, the Abbot, was preaching on that verse of the Song of Solomon, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse ; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey ; I have drank my wine with my milk." Gilbert was Aelred's friend, and knew him well, and broke forth into these words, "Large and copious is that honeycomb, which in these days has passed to the banquet of the Lord, I mean the lord Abbot of Rievaulx, news of whose death has been brought to us, while we are commenting on this passage. Methinks that in him, now that he has been taken away, this garden of ours has been laid bare, and a large bundle of its myrrh has been gathered by the Lord, its husbandman. No such honeycomb is now left in our hive. Who more pure in his life, more wise in his doctrine ? Who more suffering in body, more unwearied in spirit ! His mouth, like the honeycomb, poured forth the words of honied wisdom. His flesh

<sup>1</sup> 1166 is the common date given for St. Aelred's death ; but the Chronicle of Melrose gives 1167 ; and in the account of Byland Abbey, given in Dugdale, it appears that the year 1197 was the thirtieth year after his death. He is commonly said to have died on the 12th of January, but the reason of this is probably because his festival was appointed for that day ; no contemporary authority fixes it to that time, while Gilbert, of Hoyland, in a sermon delivered in the octave of the feast of St. Laurence, says that St. Aelred had died "in these days," and that the news had just reached him. It should be added that in a martyrology put out by Benedict XIV., St. Aelred's feast is appointed to be kept in March.

was sick with a lingering disease, but his soul within him dwelt with a lingering love on heavenly things. While his flesh, on fire with pain, was burning like myrrh, his soul was on fire with a flame, fed with the precious gum of charity ; and both together rose up in a perpetual incense of unwearied love. His body was shrivelled and wasted, but his soul was filled with marrow and fatness ; therefore will he ever praise the Lord with joyful lips. His mouth was like an honeycomb, dropping honey, for with his whole soul on his lips he used to pour forth the calm feelings of his heart, with his countenance serene, and his measured gestures indicating inward peace. His intellect was clear, and his speech thoughtful. He was modest in his questions, and more modest in his answers. Patiently did he bear with those who were troublesome, although himself a trouble to none ; and while he was acute in seeing what was wrong, he was long before he noticed it, and patient in bearing it. Often have I seen him, when any of those who sat near him broke rudely on his words, suspend what he had to say, till the other had wasted his breath ; and then when the rude torrent of wearisome speech was passed, he would take up again his words where he had left them off, with the same calmness as he had waited. He was swift to hear and slow to speak. Not that he could be said to be slow to wrath, for he had no wrath at all. A sweet honeycomb was he of whom I speak, overflowing with the honey which was within. His mind was full of cells, and he dropped his sweetness everywhere, from the comb where he had stored up matter for what he said ; and many men are living still who have tasted of his sweetness. In his doctrine he looked not for that wearisome subtlety which has more to do with



disputation than instruction. Moral science was what he studied and put out in elegant words ; he was well versed also in the language of the spiritual life, which he was wont to explain among those who were perfect. His doctrine was milk for the consolation of the simple, with which, however, he often mixed the wine of words, which rejoiced the heart. So did his teaching, though simple as milk, carry away the hearts of his hearers as though they were drunk with the wine of spiritual gladness. We must mourn that such a man has been taken from us, but still we may rejoice that we have sent forth such a bundle of myrrh from our poor gardens, to the garden of heaven. There he is now an ornament, who was a help to us upon earth."

This is a portrait of St. Aelred, for so we may now call him, drawn by one who knew him, while the recollection was fresh upon him. It may help us to get a clear idea even of his features, pallid and drawn as they were by sickness ; and at all events it gives a vivid picture of his mind, pouring itself out in little offices of love, notwithstanding his pains of body. Every history and every tradition presents the same idea, and marks him as the holy and loving Abbot, well skilled in healing hearts broken by grief, or wounded by sin. Others come down to us as holy Bishops, Martyrs, or Confessors, but St. Aelred was pre-eminently the Abbot of England.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Cistercian Teaching.*

THOUGH we have now gone through the life of St. Aelred, as far as time has spared it, and we may look upon the blessed Saint as having gone to his rest, yet in one sense he still lives to us, not only by his intercessions but in his writings, which have remained to us. He is the great Cistercian writer of England, and in this point of view we have still to look upon not only himself, but the whole intellectual movement of which he was a portion. At first sight, it would seem as if Cistercians had little or nothing to do with literature or philosophy. It was by giving up worldly studies that both St. Bernard and St. Aelred became Cistercians ; and philosophy was a portion of the sacrifice which they made to God on assuming the white habit.<sup>1</sup> St. Bernard left the schools of Chatillon to go to Cîteaux ; he had there been the best poet in the school,<sup>2</sup> and the many quotations from the classics found in his writings, show what he really had given up in sacrificing his taste and intellect to religion ; and the same was the case with St. Aelred. The only case in which a Cistercian was allowed to pursue regular studies, after becoming a monk, was, that of Otto<sup>3</sup> of Frisingen, and he, when he became a princely Bishop,

<sup>1</sup> Vit. St. Bern. lib. i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Berengar. Apol. St. Bernard often quotes Persius.

<sup>3</sup> Otto never misses an opportunity of bringing in metaphysics in his History of Frederic Barbarossa. He evidently

retained much more of the scion of the house of Hohenstauffen, than of the pupil of St. Stephen. It is remarkable too, that the scholars at Paris at first listened unmoved to St. Bernard's eloquence, and to the rough syllogisms which he propounded to them on their violation of God's holy law ; Mount St. Genevieve and Citeaux seem from the first to have been in secret opposition.<sup>1</sup> Still the Cistercian reform seemed likely to go on its own way, without clashing directly with the schools, had not St. Bernard been forced out of his cloister of Clairvaux, to oppose the rationalism which was dominant within them, in the person of Abelard. Europe might have anticipated its history by four centuries had it not been for St. Bernard. Abelard's was not a clear and distinct heresy, which could be put in a tangible shape like the Arian or Nestorian. It was a wide-spreading rationalism, sound only by accident on any point, and claiming exemption from all condemnation, on the ground that it was only one way of putting Christianity. It was no heresy, was its plea, but a bright and dazzling display of intellectual activity. The human mind had just awakened from a long sleep, and had become more philosophical. It had learned not only its Horace and its Virgil, but its Aristotle too, and it must not be stinted in the use of its newly-found treasures.

Now it was true, to a certain extent, that the twelfth century was the beginning of a new intellectual era ;

thought that Gilbert de la Porée had been harshly treated. It should be said for him that he died at Morimond, and on his death-bed protested his submission to the Church in all that he had said about Gilbert.

<sup>1</sup> Exord. Mag. b. vii. 13. and Vincent of Beauvais quoted in Manriquez in ann. 1122.

things immediately before it had been dark, not that God had ever suffered His truth to be darkened in His church, but that it was many centuries before the barbarians, who had seized on the Western empire, had leisure to spare for learning, sacred or profane. The Church had enough to do to teach them the faith. She had to fight hard to prevent herself being merged in the body politic, into which, with desperate throes, society was forming itself. But when once that struggle was over, and the crosier was clearly separated from the sceptre, then began a more fearful struggle. Men had leisure to philosophize upon the faith which they had learned, and just at that time a great revival of ancient learning took place. Aristotle and Plato symbolized for them what had lain undeveloped in their minds ; here were categories formed, and genera and species classified. They thought that they had got a new organ for the discovery of truth. It was a new field, like an unknown world, a crusade into the regions of thought. The syllogistic form was given, and matter was all that was to be found. They were not slow in finding it ; there was matter enough for dispute in their new philosophy itself. Poor human nature ! hardly had it obtained possession of its new treasure, when it began to doubt of its reality. There were genera and species in plenty ; but how far were they the real representation of external objects, or only our way of viewing them ? It was an important question ; it was asking in fact whether our idea of external things was the true one ; or in the words of modern philosophy, how much was objective, how much subjective truth. But Clairvaux and Rievaulx had nothing to do with either Realism or Nominalism, and we pass them by. As long as the schools

confined themselves to metaphysics, their din probably did not even reach the Cistercian cloister. But in the middle ages, men were not Realists and Nominalists by halves, many of them pushed their principles into their notions of the Blessed Trinity itself. It was a fearful moment for the church. Here was humanity exulting in the discovery of a class of truths which it had forgotten. It was leaping with somewhat fantastic gestures about its new domain, when it came across it to enquire whether it was quite lawful ground. Certain it was that Nominalism, when applied to the highest Christian doctrine, became a sort of Sabellianism,<sup>1</sup> and Realism took the form of a new and nameless heresy. Here then was truth, as they thought, meeting truth face to face, and the fear or doubt presented itself with which they were to side.

At this juncture, there arose a man who attempted to reconcile, after his fashion, the Church and the intellect of the age. This man was Peter Abelard, who is to be considered as the personification of the bold and restless acuteness of the schools, as well as of the worldly-spirited clerks of the time.<sup>2</sup> This novel doctor was a canon of the Church, and at the same time a gay and handsome cavalier, whose love-songs and dialectics were equally in fashion. His first exploit was to banish from the schools the Realism which he found there. All was plain and easy to him ; the ideas of the soul were but arbitrary classifications emanating from itself ; they were real as conceptions, but nothing more. In this way it would follow, that rationality

<sup>1</sup> Petavius calls it the heresy of the Nominalists.

<sup>2</sup> Heloise says to him, *Quid te Canonicum et Clericum facere oportet. c. vii. Hist. Calam. Tanti quippe tam nominis eram et juventutis et formæ gratia preeminebam, ut quamcunque fœ-*

was no more the essence of man than the power of laughing, and that it was only in our way of looking upon it, that either could be the differentia of the class.<sup>1</sup> Abelard gained his point ; he completely won the day, and beat his master, William of Champeaux, out of the field ; but he did not see that like all other Rationalism, his system introduced a scepticism far deeper than itself. He did not see, that come what may of it, our ideas are the way in which we view the external world, and if they are merely arbitrary, and not in some way a representation of the truth, then we know nothing of any object beyond ourselves. However, as yet, he was but the bold and successful innovator, the idol of the schools, the triumphant logician ; but when he afterwards hid his head in the cloister of St. Denis, when Heloise, with bitter regrets for the world which she was leaving,<sup>2</sup> had taken the veil at Argenteuil, then the conceited logician became the dangerous theologian. He must needs remodel theology ! the old school was worn out.<sup>3</sup> It was founded

*minarum nostro dignarer amore, nullam vererer repulsam. c. vi. Quorum etiam carminum plerisque adhuc regionibus decantantur. Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Abelard seems to say this when he makes each individual to have his own form, for instance, in the language of the times, he makes Socratas to be the form of Socrates. This is true in one sense, but he seems to deny that humanitas is in any real sense, his form and he makes a separate form for each part, rationalitas, bipedalitas, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Tua me ad habitum traxit passio, non Dei dilectio. Ep. 4.*

<sup>3</sup> He tries to prove by the example of St. Paul that difficulty of faith is a merit. *Cito autem sive facile credit qui indiscrete atque improvide his quæ scivit prius acquisivit quam hoc in quod persuadetur ignota ratione quantum valet discutiat an adhibere ei fidem conveniat. Introd. ad Theod. 1060.*

on faith ; Plato and Aristotle would laugh at such a religion, and Abelard was ashamed of it. He would have a new religion founded on irrefragable argument, to suit the philosophic mind.<sup>1</sup> Thus he strove to allay the sudden recoil of his contemporaries upon themselves, the fright of humanity balancing between its reason and its faith. Two great schoolmen made shipwreck of their faith ; this he was not disposed to do, for with his great and glaring faults, his overweening conceit, and his whole soul still scarred with sins, and as yet, unhealed by his forced repentance, still, to do him justice, he would have been orthodox if he could. He therefore wished to make out that faith and reason were identical. He bade the youthful schoolmen, the men of march of mind, go on and prosper. There was no cause for alarm. The Christian was after all the great logician, and faith only an intellectual opinion about things unseen.<sup>2</sup> They need have no divided love between Aristotle and Christianity. Plato indeed was a Christian and a much better one than Moses and the Prophets, for he had foreseen and made out for himself the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Abelard is continually inconsistent with himself, often using orthodox language, and protesting that he means nothing against the faith of the Church, while his words are glaringly opposed to it. On his inconsistency, see St. Bernard's Letter to Innocent.

<sup>2</sup> Abelard Op. vol. i. 3, 28. Ed. Amb. Verbum Dei quod Græci λόγον vocant, solum Christum dicimus. Hinc et juxta nominis etymologiam, quicumque huic vero Verbo inherent vere Logici sunt. In another place, Charitas Dei per fidem sive rationis donum infusa. Introd. ad Theol. 1027.

<sup>3</sup> Dum multum sudat quo modo Platonem faciat Christianum, se probat Ethnicum. St. Bern. de err. Ab. c. iv. v. Martenne Thes. nov. Anecd. 5. p. 1152.

Oh, foolish Abelard ! he did not know what he himself was doing. If the human intellect could make out the blessed truth for itself, how knew he that it was not the creator of it ? How knew he that the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity itself was not an emanation from the mind of man, framing to itself its own conception of the supreme good ?<sup>1</sup> If he had looked on a few centuries, he would have seen in the same way a certain philosophy make out, that the existence of God might be but the product of the human intellect at play with its own notions. But intellect itself would have told him that such matters were not within its jurisdiction ; it can mount up indeed through earth and heaven up to the nature of God Himself ; but it can only say that such things as it conceives, may be. To rule that they are, is not its office. And so almost by the force of reason, Abelard was compelled to say that in his Introduction to Theology he did not profess to give the truth, but only his opinion of it. His Theology was a mere intellectual exercise, a keen encounter of wits, like a disputation in the schools. Faith itself he defined to be an *opinion* on things unseen. It happened to Abelard as might have been expected ; his reason broke under the gigantic task, like an inapt instrument

<sup>1</sup> Abelard does seem to say so of the Holy Trinity. Videtur autem nobis suprapositis personarum nominibus summi boni perfectio diligenter esse descripta ; ut cum videlicet prædicatur Deum esse Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus, eum summum bonum atque in omnibus perfectum hac distinctione Trinitatis intelligamus. Introd. 1, 7. It may, however, be said of Abelard, that in other places he neutralizes what at first sight seems Sabellianism. The language of a late biographer of St. Bernard, who almost makes Abelard his hero, is more unequivocally wrong.



applied to a work which it was never meant to perform. In the attempt to explain the doctrines of the Church in perfect conformity with human reason, he explained them away.<sup>1</sup> By another natural and almost logical consequence of his attempt, he not only shook the certainty of the faith, but he erred grievously in his exposition of it. And no wonder, authority to the theologian is what axioms and postulates are to the mathematician. It contains the data, without which he cannot stir a step. He then that would enfranchise theology from authority, must enfranchise Christianity from revelation ; and freedom from the Church in theology is like freedom from numbers in arithmetic. If Abelard had, on throwing away authority, become a sceptic, he would at least have been consistent ; but to throw it away and to expect to do as well without it was folly indeed.

Abelard was half conscious of his inconsistency, and felt it necessary to defend himself. How can we believe, he says, what we do not understand ?<sup>2</sup> The Church, by putting its doctrines into words, presents them to our understanding, and the Holy Fathers have used similes and metaphors, so as to bring them down to the level of our thoughts and to confute reasoners. Why then might not the phraseology and the metaphors be perfect expressions of what they meant, if they were to be used at all ? And this was what he attempted to do ; he tried to make ecclesiastical phra-

<sup>1</sup> *Existimatio non apparentium. Introd. ad Theol. p. 977, 1061. Non tam nos veritatem dicere quam opinionis nostræ sensum quem efflagitant promulgare. p. 974, v. also 1047.*

<sup>2</sup> *Quid ad doctrinam proficit, si quod loqui volumus exponi non potest ut intelligatur. 985.*

seology more intellectual, under the notion that unless it was a perfect expression of divine things, it must be false. And he proceeds to attack St. Augustine, St. Hilary, and St. Anselm, for using imperfect metaphors on the subject of the Trinity and the Incarnation.<sup>1</sup> But the blessed Saints knew far better than Abelard, how imperfect were their words ;<sup>2</sup> but they had to choose between saying that truth was unattainable, or that it was attainable as far as we can bear. The comparisons which they used were not mere metaphors, but a tracing out, in the creation, of shadows and types, of which God is the reality and the antitype. So too, human terminology, even though used by the Church, can but most faintly express the nature of the Incomprehensible Godhead, which eludes the grasp of words and ideas. And yet words are expressions of ideas, and ideas are expressions of the truth. Categories are the laws of our thoughts, and every man knows what he means when he uses the terms Substance and Relation. They are our way of viewing things, but they are real though they are ours. Much more when used of the everlasting God are they real and objective. God is a Substance in a higher and truer sense than we can know, and the eternal Relations between the Persons of the adorable Trinity are not mere notions of our

<sup>1</sup> Of St. Anselm he has the impudence to say, St. Anselmi similitudo suffragatur hæresi. 1085.

<sup>2</sup> Tendebar in Deum et offendi in meipsum. St. Ans. Prolog. 1. Ego certe scio quam multa figmenta pariat cor humanum, et quid est cor meum nisi cor humanum. de Trin. 4, i. Jam de iis quæ nec dicuntur ut cogitantur, nec cogitantur ut sunt, respondere incipiamus. De Trin. 5, 4.

minds, but real and true in a transcendent sense surpassing all human thought.

Abelard therefore was wrong in supposing, that because ecclesiastical phraseology was imperfect, that therefore it was false. On the contrary, since God is incomprehensible, Abelard's notion of the divine nature was necessarily false, since it pretended to be perfect. Again, he could never be sure that in adoring God, he was not in reality worshipping his own conception of the Deity, for on his own showing it might be an idea created by his intellect. But St. Augustine and St. Anselm knew that they were adoring the one true and right conception of Almighty God, which they had received from without, from the Holy Church who had embodied it in words. They therefore had a right to reason upon the faith, which Abelard had not ; for he had no data on which to philosophize. Their aim was to make the faith of the Church as intellectual, as that which is above intellect is capable of being ; Abelard tried to reduce it to the perfect level of the intellect, and after having fused it in this earthly crucible, he found that it had become, not the faith of the Church, but something else. But the Saint of Hippo might be bold, for he had long contemplated and adored the ever-blessed mystery, and he knew by loving faith that his burning heart looked not on an abstraction. The idea which he had received from the Church had grown upon him in beauty and intensity the more he had looked upon it. He therefore knew well what he did, when he answered the opponents of the blessed truth by reasoning. He bade them look on their own souls, and see whether they understood themselves ; and after confounding them with their ignorance of their own nature, he bids them

not despair.<sup>1</sup> Human nature is indeed a mystery, and yet it is the image of God. It is not a mere simile, but it is a true representation of God ; imperfect but not unreal. It contains within itself a trinity, a faint shadow of the everlasting Trinity ; yet shadow though it be, it does give us a true insight, as far as it goes, of the adorable mystery. And after all his efforts the Saint sinks upon his knees, and confesses his inability to comprehend this mighty Truth. So too St. Anselm ;<sup>2</sup> if by reason alone he professed to seek for God, it was because he knew that he had found Him already. To every word that he used he communicated the intensity of his own idea, so that they ceased to be mere words, and received a reality which they did not possess in themselves. But Abelard was neither St. Augustine nor St. Anselm, but only Peter Abelard. He did not choose to be a Christian doctor, so he became something very like a heretic ; and so he might have died, had not St. Bernard arisen to save him from becoming an heresiarch.

The first condemnation of Abelard at Soissons did not proceed from St. Bernard. It seems to have come from the teachers of the old school, whose influence he

<sup>1</sup> Cum in his quæ nostris corporalibus objacent sensibus, vel quod nos ipsi in interiore homine sumus, scientia comprehendendis laboremus nec sufficiamus, nec tamen impudenter in illa quæ supra sunt divina et ineffabilia pietas fidelis ardescit. De Trin. 5. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Puto quia ea ipsa ex magna parte, si vel mediocris ingenii est potest ipse sibi saltem sola ratione persuadere.—Monolog. 1. Ratione ejus (Roscellini) error demonstrandus est. De Fide in Trin. 3.

had destroyed.<sup>1</sup> His accusers were no match for him in learning, and he convicted them of ignorance and mistakes in theology; and in the end, he seems to have been condemned in an arbitrary way. St. Bernard does not seem at first to have been unfavourably disposed to Abelard; he visited the monastery of the Paraclete, of which Heloise was Abbess, and which was under Abelard's direction, and the nuns were rejoiced to see him. He does not appear to have read his works until they were sent to him by his friend William of St. Thierry.<sup>2</sup> "Of these things," he says

<sup>1</sup> There seems no reason to doubt Abelard's own graphic account of the council of Soissons, in his *Historia Calamitatum*. Berengarius's attack upon the Bishops who were present cannot be trusted in detail, from its manifest exaggeration, but its tone is that of a man attacking the love of ease of a high and dry school in authority. Berengarius's work is curious, as a specimen of a middle-age pamphlet. It is a flippant and profane attack on St. Bernard, which its author was obliged to defend in his maturer years by treating as a joke. *Si quid in personam hominis Dei dixi, joco legatur non serio*. In the same place, he excuses himself by saying that Aristotle attacked Socrates, and St. Jerome attacked St. Augustine. Ep. 18, inter ep. Abael. vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> It seems as if St. Bernard's attack on Abelard had been placed rather too early. It is true that Abelard points him out as his opponent before he became Abbot of St. Gildas, but from St. Bernard's own letters it is evident that he took no active part against him until his return to France from Brittany. And certain it is, that the same Abelard, apparently before he established himself permanently a second time at the Paraclete, but certainly after his retirement to St. Gildas, writes to St. Bernard about the *Charitas qua me præcipue amplecteris*. Abael. Op. p. vol. 1, p. 244. Again, William of Thierry finds it necessary to exhort St. Bernard strongly not to allow affection to prevent his taking an active part against Abelard.

to William, "I have hardly heard anything." It was during Lent that the Abbot's book came to him, and he would not break off the quiet of the season by plunging into Abelard's Introduction to Theology. But when Lent was over, and he had thoroughly examined the question, the whole importance of the matter burst upon him. Abelard's doctrines had spread far and wide ; men from all parts of Europe flocked to his lectures ; his books had crossed the seas, and were read beyond the Alps. There was a dangerous Rationalism infecting the intellectual youth of the rising generation. It had even spread among the cardinals, and Abelard had a party in the sacred college itself. It was high time to oppose the evil ; and none was so able to do so as St. Bernard. None had such an instinctive perception of Christian doctrine, or was more capable of laying his finger precisely on the question at issue. It was not hard, therefore, for a mind like his to see the shallowness of Abelard's principles. Nothing is more certain than that opinion and faith are not the same thing ; it is a mere fact that the Saints are as sure of the reality of their faith as of an object perceived by the senses, while opinion, by its very nature, is not certainty. And this was a fact which Abelard overlooked ; whether rightly or wrongly, faith is entirely independent of reason. Intellect, indeed, has a certainty of its own in its own sphere, in matters which are absolutely true or absolutely false ; but no one would pretend that such is the case with the subjects treated of in Christian doctrine, for they are above intellect.<sup>1</sup> Abelard might,

<sup>1</sup> Quod intellexisti non est de eo quod ultra quæras, aut si est non intellexisti. De Cons. 5, 3.

indeed, have said that truth about the nature of God was unattainable on earth, but to say that it was attainable by reason alone was manifestly untrue.

This was the moral of all Cistercian teaching, and the history of their quarrel with the schools ; they taught men to seek certainty elsewhere. "The Spirit of God will lead you into all truth. What means all Truth ?" said a voice heard one Advent in the cloister of Rievaulx. "It means that one truth which makes all things true. For in one sense, all things that are true ; for whatever is false, is not at all. But that truth into which the apostles were brought, was that in which all things are, and which is in all things, in which there is nothing false, nothing ambiguous, nothing deceptive ; and this Truth is seen by the heart, not by the flesh." And that this line of teaching was the right one to save the age from Rationalism, was proved by the event. Abelard's influence melted before St. Bernard. He challenged the Saint to dispute with him at the Council of Soissons. St. Bernard at first refused to dispute with one who had been trained to disputation from his youth ; besides it was a question of authority, not of disputation. At length, however, when he found that the truth was likely to suffer from his refusal, he consented, at the instance of his friends, with tears in his eyes, determined, according to our Lord's rule, not to think beforehand what he should say. When the day came, the town of Soissons was crowded with men from all parts of France. The king and the Bishops were there, and on the other hand the noisy and tumultuous men of the schools, the partisans of Abelard. All the world was there to witness the encounter between the two first men of the age, the representatives of opposite

principles. To the surprise of all, after St. Bernard had given an account of the opinion to be canvassed, Abelard, instead of replying, appealed to the Pope. Abelard had himself given the challenge, and was not a man wont to be intimidated. Besides, St. Bernard, who once stopped a persecution raised against the Jews, was not a likely man to allow any violence to be used against Abelard's person, either by king or populace. One account, however, says that he appealed to Rome, from dread of a popular tumult. Another account says, that when he attempted to speak, his memory failed him and he could not utter a word. Amidst these conflicting accounts, it is safest to judge by the result. Abelard started on his way to Rome to support the appeal which he had made ; it was by no means a desperate case, for he had, as has been noticed above, a party in the Sacred College. But by the time that he had got as far as Cluny, his heart had failed him ; there appears in many passages of his writings a hesitation, as though if he could but have reconciled Aristotle and the Church, he would have been orthodox ; his conscience was not at rest, and the sight of St. Bernard at the council had awakened it anew. His had been a long and weary life, made up of headstrong passions and signal misfortunes ; and his troubled spirit longed for rest. When therefore the Abbot of Citeaux came to Cluny, and offered to make his peace with St. Bernard, Abelard was prepared to make a confession of faith which was equivalent to a retractation of his errors ; and when the Pope's letter arrived condemning his opinions, it found him already prepared to submit. Abelard broken in health and spirit lived for three years in the peaceful cloister of Cluny, and died a sincere penitent in 1142.



Thus most effectually did Cistercian teaching fulfil its task. Abelard left no school behind him. His work in the schools had been simply one of destruction. His teaching had nothing positive ; and when once he had hidden himself in the cloister of Cluny, nothing more is heard of him.

It was easy therefore to confute Abelard so far ;<sup>1</sup> but St. Bernard had another task to perform. How were the sons of the Church to recover a healthy tone after being spoiled by this baneful teaching ?<sup>2</sup> For this purpose it was not enough to refute, or even to substitute truth for error, they must also learn to love the truth. And to effect this was the object of all Cistercian teaching. A moral discipline was required to heal the diseased will. With a philosophy, in reality far deeper than that of Abelard, though it did not profess to be philosophy at all, St. Bernard made the acceptance of religious truth to depend upon the will. Faith he defined to be a willing and certain foretaste of a truth not yet made manifest. Truth is offered for acceptance, not to the intellect, but to the conscience. The Church does for us the office of the intellect ; it puts the faith for us into an intelligible form. And so the creed, the intellectual object, as it may be called, of our faith, comes to us from without. It is a certain,

<sup>1</sup> St. Bernard went straight to the point when he attacked Abelard as holding opinions contrary to reason, as well as to faith. *Quid enim, he says, magis contra rationem, quam ratione rationem conari transcendere.*

<sup>2</sup> The Abbé Ratisbonne, in his beautiful *Life of St. Bernard*, compares Abelard's doctrines to Kant's Antinomies of pure reason. This is paying Abelard's philosophical powers a great compliment. He is much more like Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity.

definite, and substantive thing, embodied in words by the Church, and coming to us in a clear, unbroken sound, for the Church speaks but one language. Just as words are to us the interpretation of what we feel, by giving us a classification for our sensations, so do the words of the Holy Church interpret for us what we know of God. But St. Bernard went deeper than this ; the real and heavenly object of our faith comes to us through the Sacraments, and so God Himself is the real cause of our knowledge of Him ; and it is love, by which we are united to Him, which fills up, as it were, the outline of the Church, and gives a meaning to our imperfect words beyond what they have of their own nature. Love, therefore, is the proper antidote to Rationalism ; and St. Bernard did much more towards healing the wounds of the Church, when he preached his Sermons on the Canticles, than when he refuted Abelard, in his letter to Pope Innocent. Why, indeed, should he seek by premiss and conclusion for Him whom he has found already by love ? “ To those who thus seek him, says St. Bernard,<sup>1</sup> the Lord cries out, *Noli me tangere*, Touch me not ; that is, Quit this erring sense ; lean on the Word, learn to go by faith : faith, which cannot err ; which seizes on what is invisible, feels not the need of sense, passes the bounds of human reason, the use of nature, the bonds of experience. Why ask the eye for what it cannot see ? Why stretch forth the hand to grope for what is above it ? Let faith pronounce of me what is not unworthy of my majesty. Learn to hold for certain, to follow in safety, what it teaches thee. Touch me not ; for I have not yet ascended to

<sup>1</sup> In Cant. 28.

my Father. As if when He has once ascended, He would either be willing to be loved, or we capable of touching him. Yea, but thou shalt be capable, by love, not by the touch ; by desire, not by the eye ; by faith, not by sense. Faith in the depth of its mystic bosom comprehends what is the length and breadth, and depth and height. Thou shalt touch Him with the hand of faith, the finger of desire, the embrace of devotion ; thou shalt touch Him with the eye of the heart. And will He then be black ?<sup>1</sup> Nay, the beloved is white and red. Beautiful exceedingly is He who is surrounded with the red flowers of the rose and the white lily of the valleys, that is, the choirs of martyrs and of virgins ; and who, sitting in the midst of them, is himself both a virgin and a martyr. Ten thousand times ten thousand are around Him, but needest thou fear lest thou shouldst mistake some other for Him, when thou seekest Him whom thou lovest ? Nay, thou wilt not hesitate whom to select out of them all. Easily wilt thou recognize Him out of the thousands more beautiful than all ; and thou wilt say, This is He that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the multitude of His strength."

Before such teaching as this, no wonder that Rationalism fled away ; cold and dead as it is, it cannot hold before warmth and life. But Cistercian teaching had a great influence on the Church after it. Its opposition to the scholastic method was most salutary ; it gave a breathing time to the Church, and prepared it to receive the teaching of the great schoolmen of the thirteenth century. The church was not yet ready for the schools, or rather the schools were not ready for the church ;

<sup>1</sup> Song of Solomon, i. 5.

men must learn to love the truth before they can safely philosophize upon it. St. Bernard and St. Aelred were not mere negative opponents of Rationalism ; there is a great deal of positive theology in their works, dressed in the commanding eloquence of St. Bernard and the sweet language of St. Aelred. No one can read the masterly refutation of the Errors of Gilbert de la Porée without wondering at the acuteness as well as the deep knowledge of theology possessed by St. Bernard, the more wonderful because Gilbert's errors belong rather to the Pantheism of the thirteenth than to the Rationalism of the twelfth century. The questions so beautifully treated of in the Sermons on the Canticles are precisely the same as those which appear in the Summa of St. Thomas, how the nature of God is very oneness, and there is nothing accidental in Him, how angels see all things in the Word, how the soul of man is naturally eternal, how grace differs from the substance of the soul. In St. Aelred the same thing is observable ; none can help being struck with his clear and orthodox language on the subject of the Incarnation, while he rejects what he calls scholastic subtleties. The influence of St. Anselm is very easily to be traced in his writings, so that in some parts of his *Mirror of Charity* he is much more of a schoolman than St. Bernard. Still it is true that the office of the Cistercians was to oppose the scholastic philosophy, which the age could not as yet bear. Cîteaux purified the schools by keeping aloof from them ; it was reserved for another order to make an inroad into the schools themselves, and to purify them by establishing Christ's banner in the midst of them, and marking them with His cross. Thus God ever in his goodness provides for the wants of the Church. First came St. Anselm, the saintly philosopher, to stir

up the intellect of the Church ; and then St. Bernard and St. Aelred to check the pride of intellect, and then last of all the great Saint, who could safely doubt of all, for he knew beforehand how to solve all doubts at the foot of the crucifix, St. Thomas Aquinas.

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